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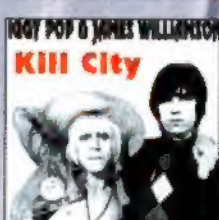
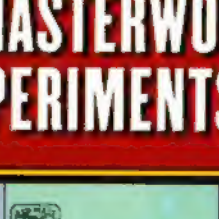
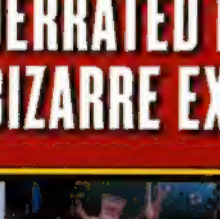
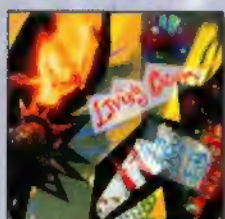
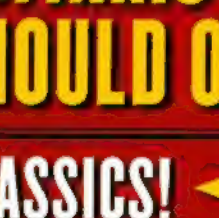
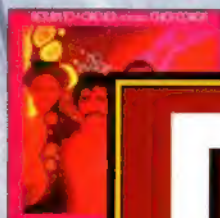


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Soundhole Are We Okay Yet?

It's probably too soon to predict whether we've survived the economic downturn and the brutal treachery of 9/11/01, but I'm embracing optimism. On that note, it was hard to discern whether *anything* crappy had happened last year by the cheerfulness at the January 2002 Winter NAMM Show in Anaheim, California. While there were certainly grumbles about the intense emotional and fiscal roller coaster that was 2001, most companies launched a bunch of new products and were very enthusiastic about the future. Why is this important to you? Well, the gear biz is a business, and healthy, successful manufacturers have the juice to develop the tools that keep you and me inspired to explore new galaxies of tone. I'll leave it to the folks at Dial-a-Psychic to reveal whether this year

will shower us with prosperity, but I do know that next month's "Gear 2002" issue will unveil a plethora of exciting guitars and guitar toys.

Rumble gets the gold. No, GP's little sibling didn't crash the Winter Olympics and score a medal in snowboarding, but it did receive a gold record. Epic Records—and its very groovy representative, Tom Muzquiz—wanted to thank *Rumble* for being the first major-market guitar mag to put Mudvayne on its cover. So when the group's *L.D. 50* charted 500,000 in sales, *Rumble* was added to the list of those presented with a golden-disc award. Our thanks go out to Tom, Epic, and the Mudvayne gang for thinking of us. I'd also like to thank GP's Emily Fasten and Shawn Hammond for editorial help, MPN Art Director Alexandra Zeigler for *Rumble's* stunning design, and Special Projects Director

Dierdre Jones for having such great ears.

Frets is reborn. On the subject of other magazines in the *Guitar Player* family, I'm happy to announce that *Frets* is being relaunched as an acoustic-music publication with attitude. GP Senior Editor Andy Ellis is helming the revitalized mag, and his enthusiasm for all things acoustic invigorates every word. But while Andy honors and respects acoustic traditions, he's also a forward-thinking little sprite who fearlessly embraces acoustic-electric technology, amplification, and modern-recording techniques. The result is a mag that is fun to read, informative, a tad edgy, and absolutely relevant. GP readers who know and trust Andy's work will be thrilled that he is putting his formidable energies into *Frets*. To keep yourself posted on the re-



launch, click to guitarplayer.com.

Dream a little dream of gear. But wait, there's more! We also just published *Dream Machines*—a guide to exquisite guitars, amps, and effects. If you're into big, beautiful, glossy photos of high-end gear, you have to check out this baby. Edited by GP's Senior Editor and tech whiz, Art Thompson, *Dream Machines* is a dazzling display of sexy tone toys. Grab a copy and dream on. —MICHAEL MOJENDA ■

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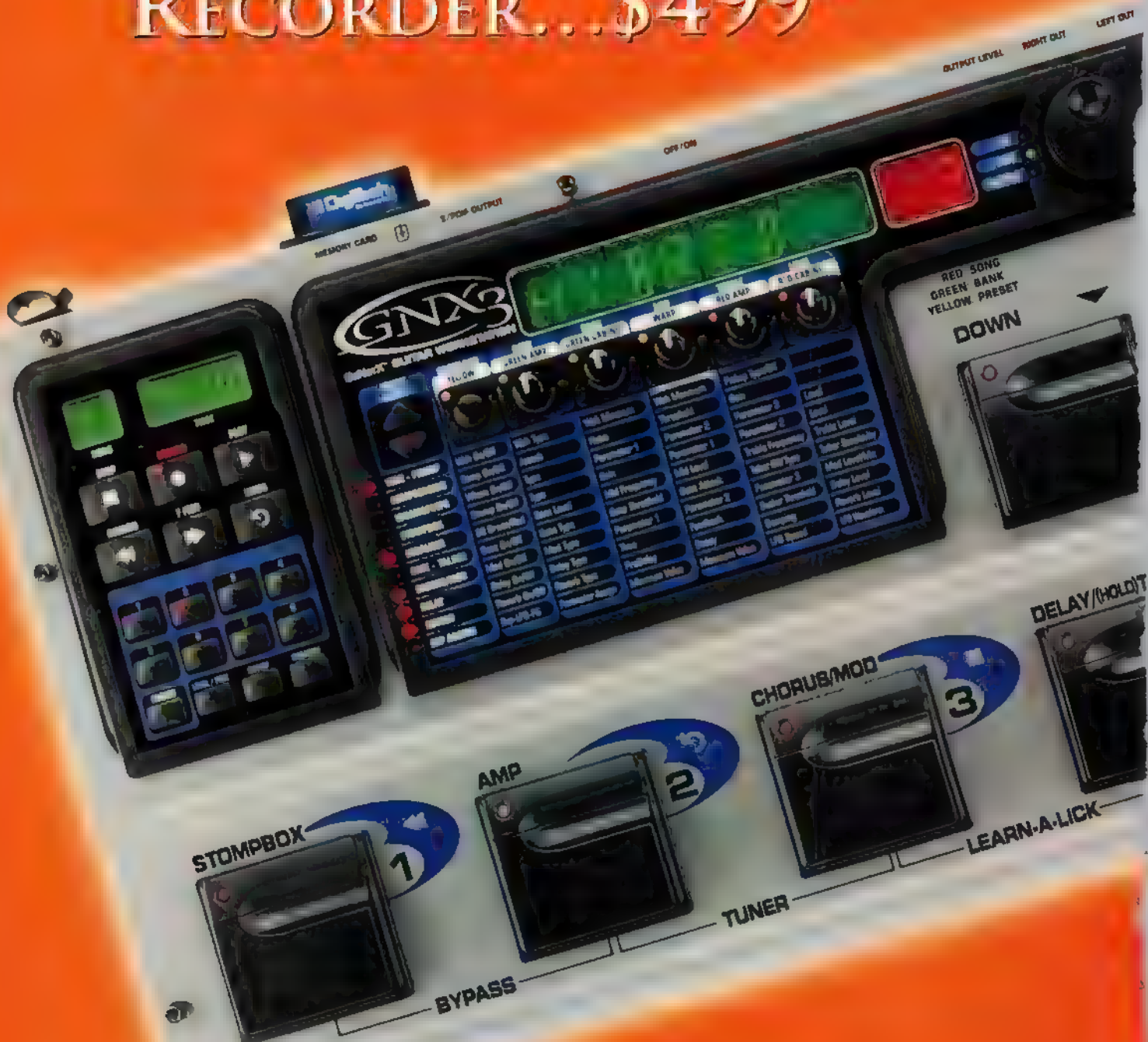



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SUM 41

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Feedback

SRV

I just finished the article on Stevie Ray in the February '02 issue. Thank you, thank you, thank you! I got into his music two years after his passing. I enjoyed the comments from his bandmates, Tommy Shannon and Chris Layton. Stevie wasn't just a huge talent on guitar, he was a wonderful human being as well—loyal to bandmates and humble about his own abilities. One of the best kept secrets in blues music is the *In Session* album, a recording of Stevie playing with Albert King on a Canadian TV show. It's some of the best blues guitar I've heard! Thanks again for an insightful look at Stevie at Montreux!

Tom Usellis
Hanover Park, IL

"Chordless Comping"

I had just gotten the February '02 issue in my mailbox, and 15 minutes later I picked up my guitar and tried out some of the examples in "Chordless Comping." Half an hour later, I'm writing my first ever letter to a publication. I'm totally blown away—this was exactly the kick in the pants I needed to get past the inevitable "now what?" doldrums. I've gotten the same results more often than not for the past several years. I finally had to say "Thanks!" The endless opportunities for growth that *GP* provides—not to mention the interviews and reviews—are worth twice the cover price. I have two suggestions: more lessons and a bi-weekly publication schedule!

Alan Page
Ft. Wayne, IN

John Cipollina

I enjoyed the "Heroes" article on John Cipollina in the January '02 issue. Quicksilver Messenger Service is one of my all-time favorite bands, and Cipollina's playing has had a strong influence on my own playing. I think Quicksilver's *Happy Trails* album is one of the greatest live guitar sets that has ever been recorded.

As you may know, a great video documentary about John was recently made available. The Web site for ordering it is www.johncipollina.com. I purchased the video and really enjoyed watching (and listening to) it. John Cipollina had a really unique sound that is instantly identifiable to his fans.

Paul R. Pokorski
Verona, PA

The Dixie Flag

We may all be sorry we went down this road, but I want to respond to the letter by A. Tate in the January '02 "Feedback." The Confederate flag stands for things I don't believe in, and I would not want to pose with it. However, if that is what the band is about, or if they are so insensitive as to feature themselves with that symbol, then *Guitar Player* should not feel a responsibility to "clean them up" for publication.

Name withheld
Phoenix, AZ

Having been born and raised in the deep, deep South, I'd like to comment on A. Tate's objection to the Confederate flags displayed behind the band Dope in the January '02 issue. Your chances of encountering anyone in the South—or anywhere else, for that matter—who genuinely subscribes to the belief system that the Confederate flag allegedly represents are so remote as to be practically zero. Here, and hopefully everywhere, that banner is viewed as an iconic representation of rebellion against authority—a statement of one's (or a band's) freedom from control. The Civil War was, after all, fought over the right of states to determine their own courses apart from the dictates of the federal government. Slavery was a side issue—albeit a horrible, demeaning, unforgivable side issue. I submit that those who are suffering fainting spells over the display of the Confederate flag take a deep breath and get busy on the behalf of causes that matter here and now—personal liberty and freedom from religious persecution being just two that spring instantly to mind.

G. Patrick Bryant
Huntsville, AL

35th and Beyond

The January '02 issue was in many ways a hymn to the past, with a dramatic cover photo of the true legend of rock guitar, Jimi Hendrix, entering into the spotlight the same year that *Guitar Player* did—1967. I was glad to see that the issue included Popa Chubby in the "Pickups" section. It is somewhat disappointing that he did not get more space in your magazine, given all that he has done for over a decade to keep the blues alive, and guitar playing a vital form of today's music.



He is huge in Europe—grabbing covers of European guitar magazines on a regular basis, selling out major halls here, and opening for B.B. King last June in Paris. He is part of today's music, and his New York City blues movement will help blues remain one of America's most important contributions to culture and art. It's a shame that this American artist receives so little recognition in his home country.

Guitar Player prides itself on being a vital part of guitar players' universe. To keep yourself meaningful, you need to be more daring, and give today's players more exposure. You took a chance by placing Jimi Hendrix front and center in 1968—that was a statement of innovation, and of where things were to go. As beautiful a picture as the front cover is for this commemorative issue, an argument exists that the first cover of your 35th anniversary should have been an artist that is going to contribute to the future. If it is your belief that such an artist does not exist, you should be editorializing the point to no end trying to change that. Is it your intention to put Jimi Hendrix on your 70th anniversary issue, too. By that time, he will not have played for the last 67 years of *Guitar Player's* existence?

David Chase Lopes
Paris, France

Address correspondence to Feedback, c/o *Guitar Player*, 2800 Campus Dr., San Mateo, CA 94403, or e-mail us at guitplyr@musicplayer.com. *GP* regrets that until the advent of the 40-hour workday we will not be able to answer every letter.

TOOLBOX



> > > ESSENTIAL INFO FOR GUITARISTS

FRETWIRE*

FAB FIND: A six-minute chat between the **Beatles**, **Brian Wilson** of the **Beach Boys**, and **Dick Dale** brought in \$10,400 at an online auction in November. The conversation was recorded on a 33-rpm acetate disc for Capitol Records on March 11, 1964, to promote a Hollywood event called the Teen Fair. Topics on the recording—the only one in existence—ranged from clothing and hairstyles to an untitled movie project that eventually became *A Hard Day's Night*. Where did this gem of rock history come from? It was bought at a flea market in Newport Beach, California, for \$5

.... **GIMME INDIE ROCK:** San Francisco's **Noise Pop** festival celebrated its ten-year anniversary February 26 through March 3, with indie gods such as **Modest Mouse**, **Guided By Voices**, **Death Cab for Cutie**, **Dismemberment Plan**, and the first-time collaboration of **John Doe** and **Niko Case** headlining various venues around the city. The six-day festival included the Noise Pop Film Fest, an Educational Series, and a special anniversary shindig. For more info on other upcoming Noise Pop events, check out noisepop.com. . . **GUITARS ONLY, PLEASE:** On January 17, the New York chapter of the Recording Academy (the fine folks who bring you the Grammy Awards) kicked off its "Nothin' But..." concert/discussion series at New York's Bottom Line, with "Nothin' But...Guitars." **Carlos**

> PAWNSHOP PRIZE Cordovox CL-30

The Cordovox name is usually associated with a line of Italian-made accordions and electric pianos that were distributed by Chicago Musical Instruments (CMI also owned Gibson from the late '40s until the late '70s). As part of its keyboard line, Cordovox also offered rotary-speaker units such as the CL-30 featured here. Designed for use with a separate amplifier, the CL-30 creates a chorusing effect by spinning a slotted Styrofoam cone in front of a stationary 10" speaker—in this case, a JBL K 110.

The Tolex-covered unit is about the size of a small PA enclosure, and has a cloth-covered front with a chromed logo. Sound is dispersed via cutouts on the top and sides, and an opening on the back serves as a place to stash the power cord, speaker-input cable, and footswitch. All of the CL-30's functions are controlled by three footswitches: Main/Echo (which, in a guitar setup, turns the CL-30 on or off), Tremolo (a two-position speed control), and Ensemble (which is supposed to allow you to run the rotary speaker and a separate cabinet simultaneously, but only duplicates the Main/Echo function in a guitar setup).

I connected the CL-30 to the extension-speaker jack of a Budda Superdrive 80 II (which was also driving a Marshall 4x12), dialed in a hip tone, pressed the Main/Echo button, and, bingo—the room filled with a lush



blend of rotary-speaker swirl and punchy, 4x12 grind. The combined sound is much more expansive and encompassing than anything you could get from a single 4x12, yet the volume increase is hardly noticeable. The CL-30's grooviness comes in two flavors: a rich, slow wash or a rapid modulation that gives organ-like pulse to chords and lead lines.

A CL-30 goes for around \$250 these days, which makes it a worthy alternative to the more collectible Fender Vibratone. Either unit is heavy enough to give you renewed appreciation for solid-state chorusing, but the three-dimensional sound of a rotary speaker is definitely in a league of its own. —ART THOMPSON

> LIVE WIRES

Nickelback

Touring in support of their mega-popular brand of grunge metal, Nickelback guitarists Chad Kroeger and Ryan Peake use contrasting guitars to forge distinct timbres, but they maintain similar backlines to unify their wall of sound. Kroeger's main electrics are Paul Reed Smith Singlecuts loaded with PRS #7 pickups and strung with Ernie Ball 011-.048 sets, and his acoustic of choice is a Morgan fitted with a Fishman pickup and strung with Ernie Ball mediums. Peake picks stock Gibson ES-135 and ES-335 models, and a Fender Tele with EMG81 and EMG60 pickups—all of which are strung with Ernie Ball .012-.056 sets. Each player uses Dunlop .60mm Tortex picks.

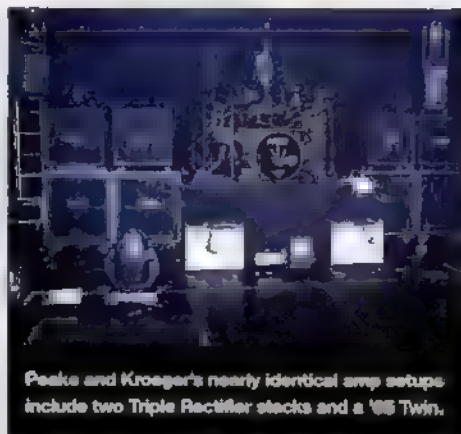
Both Kroeger and Peake plug into Sennheiser wireless systems, which route their signals to their respective pedalboards and amps. Kroeger's pedalboard includes a Heil Talk Box (driven by the speaker jack on his Mesa/Boogie Triple Rectifier head), a direct box for his acoustic, and four Boss pedals—a TR-2 tremolo, a TU-2 tuner, an LS-2 line selector (to switch between clean and dirty amps), and an NS-2 noise gate (for his dirty signal). Peake's pedalboard also includes five Boss pedals—an OC-2 octave, a TU-2 tuner, a DD-3 digital delay, an LS-2 line selector, and an NS-2 noise gate—as well as a Vox wah.

For clean tones, both guitarists rely on Fender '65 Twin Reverb reissues. For additional textures, Peake's clean rig also includes a Vox AC30 Super Twin Reverb head running through a Vox Super Berkeley III model V4083 cabinet. For dirty sounds, Kroeger and Peake use an A/B/Y box (a Horizon for Kroeger, and a Whirlwind for Peake) to play through two Mesa/Boogie Triple Rectifiers stacks. One head powers two Marshall 4x12s, and the other powers two Boogie 4x12s. All rack power and lighting is provided by Furman PL-8 units. —LISA SHARKEN

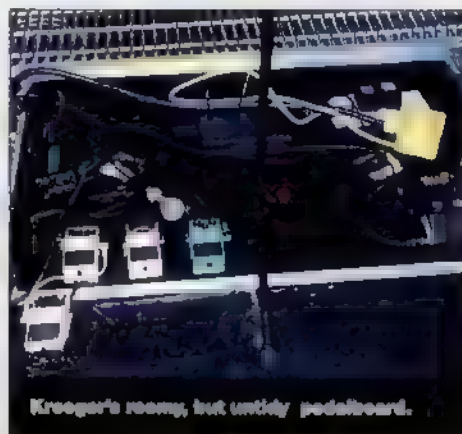
Thanks to Kris Dawson for technical info.



Chad Kroeger (left) and Ryan Peake riffing it up onstage.



Peake and Kroeger's nearly identical amp setups include two Triple Rectifier stacks and a '65 Twin.



Kroeger's roomy, but untidy pedalboard.



Kroeger's simple rack.



Peake's rack with a Vox AC30 Super Twin Reverb head and a Super Berkeley III cabinet.

TOOLBOX*

>>> ESSENTIAL INFO FOR GUITARISTS

FRETWIRE*

Alomar, Sharon Isbin, Nile Rodgers, and Steve Vai were on hand to discuss their guitar styles and perspectives, and to demonstrate the techniques that define their playing. . . . **TWISTED BENEFIT:** The New York Steel benefit concert, held at the Hammerstein Ballroom on November 28, not



Twisted Sister's Jay Jay French at the New York Steel benefit concert.



Anthrax's Scott Ian inches charitable donating at the Hammerstein Ballroom.

only raised an estimated \$90,000 for the New York Police and Fire Widows Fund (donations and additional info at Box 3713, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163; nypfwc.com.), but also brought **Twisted Sister** back together for their first show in 14 years. Also on hand to rock were **Ace Frehley, Anthrax, Overkill,** and former Skid Row frontman **Sebastian Bach.** . . . **NEW INDUCTEES:** The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame recently announced its inductees for 2002. This year's immortalized heroes include the

> HEROES

Don Rich

As Buck Owens' right-hand man and head Buckaroo, Don Rich had as much to do with sculpting the Bakersfield sound as Merle Haggard, Roy Nichols, and Owens himself. Rich's Telecaster work is quintessential Bakersfield—full of clucky phrasing and a bone-dry tone with nary a wasted note. Honky-Tonkers such as Pete Anderson, Marty Stuart, and Dale Watson all exude the spirit of Rich in their styles with a less-is-more approach, and an ear for taste and tone over Tele histrionics.

Although he might have come off as a good ol' boy, Rich was, in fact, a studied musician who could read music as well as arrange it. He was also an amazing jack-of-all-trades, playing fiddle and singing lead harmonies with Owens on hits such as "Tiger by the Tail" and "My Heart Skips a Beat." The group also had a hit with the aptly titled instrumental "Buckaroo"—which showcased Rich's sparkling Tele tone, as well as his concise, melodic style.

When Rich was tragically killed in a motorcycle crash on July 17, 1974, Owens was devastated, later admitting that, "My musical life ended when he did." A few years ago, the Sundazed label launched an onslaught of Buck Owens & the Buckaroos reissues, and any of these albums can act as a



reminder of an artist who left an indelible imprint on country music.

DARRIN FOX

SONGCRAFT Roland Orzabal

As the driving force behind *Tears for Fears*, Roland Orzabal dominated the airwaves during the mid to late '80s with blockbusters such as "Everybody Wants to Rule the World," "Shout," and "Sowing the Seeds of Love." Despite the band's electronic side, their 1983 debut was written entirely on acoustic guitar, and each subsequent album was graced by more and more great guitar work. Orzabal recently released his first solo album, *Tomcats Screaming Outside* (Gold Circle), and he is currently back in the studio with former TFF bandmate Curt Smith after more than a decade of fronting the band alone. —SHAWN HAMMOND

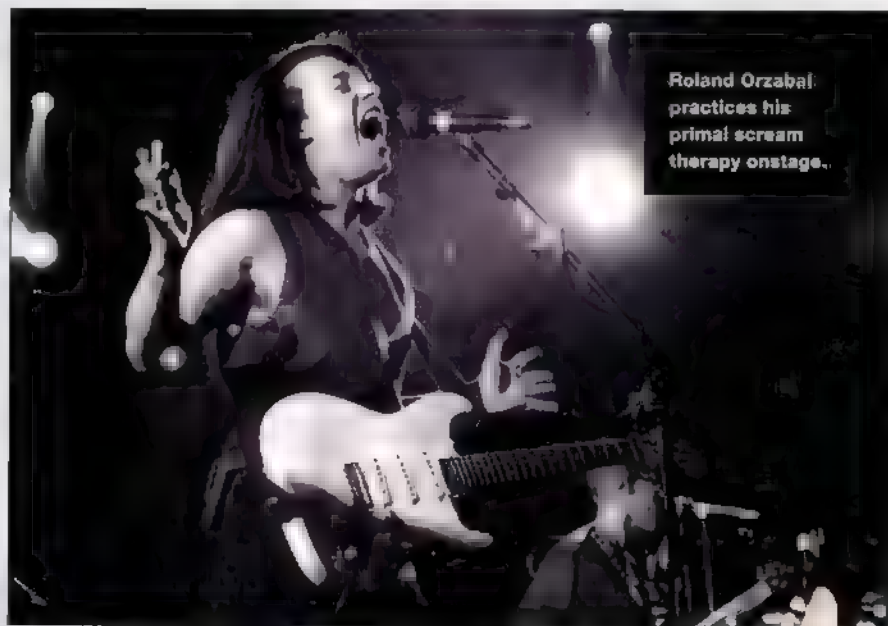
"Most songs you write can be traced back to earlier fumbblings—they rarely pop out of nowhere," says Orzabal. "It often happens that you'll become obsessed with a certain chord or chord sequence for a few months, and then, one day, you find yourself in an inspired mood, turning the thing you've been mucking about with into a means of expressing yourself."

"When I write on guitar, the song tends to be more predictable than when I use keyboards—which provide limitless

sounds. Writing on the guitar requires more divine inspiration, because if you don't come up with unique chords or chord patterns, you'll tread the same territory that people have for god knows how long."

"Even so, a relatively nondescript guitar

part can *make* a song. You just have to wait until the part is arranged within the tune, and that transition is one hell of a journey—it's a great surprise sometimes. But Curt always says if the initial idea sounds good on guitar, it is good."



Roland Orzabal practices his primal scream therapy onstage.

SETUPS OF THE STARS Michael Thompson

You've heard the guitar playing of hired-gun extraordinaire Michael Thompson on movie soundtracks such as *Running Scared* and *Ace Ventura, When Nature Calls*, on various TV themes and jingles, and on record with artists such as Celine Dion and N'Sync. To field the diverse array of calls he receives, Thompson commissioned L.A. guitar builder Greg Back to build a versatile guitar.

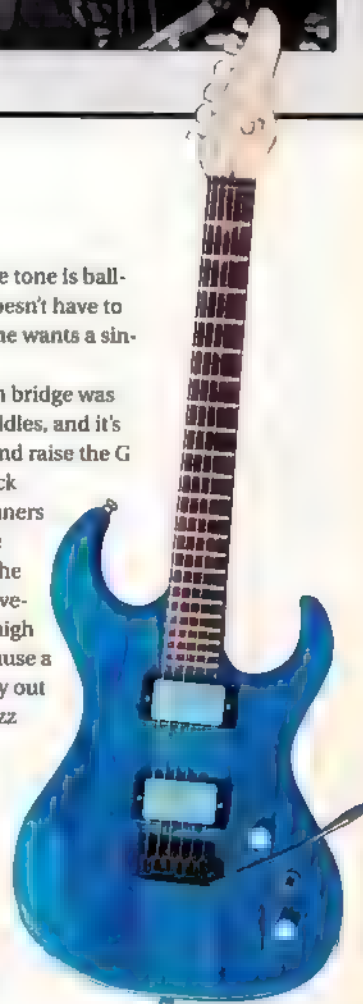
The medium-weight swamp ash body features a hand-rubbed blue stain and a very thin nitrocellulose covering. Back didn't have a neck plate, so he counter-sank the neck bolts into the body—a situation that turned into an ergonomic benefit because he could then sculpt the heel joint for better upper-fret access. The maple neck features a cocobolo fretboard and the same nitrocellulose finish. This finish combination gives the guitar a very clear, bell-like quality when played acoustically. For pickups, Thompson chose a TV Jones TV Tron Classic for the neck position, and a higher-output TV Tron Plus for the bridge. (The pickups are basically reproductions of late-'50s Filter Trons in a standard humbucker size.) The TV Trons are set close to the strings— $1/16$ " for the bridge pickup, and $1/8$ " for the neck pickup—and the wiring is standard, with master volume and tone controls, and a 3-way pickup selector. Thompson says the combination of woods and pickups gives the

guitar the best of his Strat and Les Paul. The tone is ballsy, but it cuts through enough so that he doesn't have to reach for another guitar every time someone wants a single-coil sound.

For added sustain and clarity, the Gotoh bridge was specially ordered with a steel block and saddles, and it's set up so you can pull up on the trem bar and raise the G string a whole step. For tuning stability, Back equipped the guitar with Sperzel locking tuners and a graphite nut, and he made sure there was straight string pull from the tuners to the nut. Thompson attacks the strings aggressively, so he likes the nut height exceptionally high for open-string clarity and a tight feel. Because a high nut can make lower-register notes play out of tune, Thompson had Back install the Buzz Feiten Tuning System.

The distance from the bottom of the strings to the top of the first fret is .024". The 25 5/8"-scale fretboard—which is adjusted with no relief—has Dunlop 6100 frets, and string height at the 12th fret is 5/64". Thompson uses Ernie Ball strings gauged .010, .013, .017, .026, .038, and .048.

—GARY BRAWER, brawer.com



TOOLBOX*

>>> ESSENTIAL INFO FOR GUITARISTS

FRETWIRE*

Ramones, the Talking Heads, Chet Atkins, Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, Isaac Hayes, Brenda Lee, Gene Pittney, and Stax Records co-founder Jim Stewart. ... **PASS-**

ING NOTES: Chuck Schuldiner, vocalist and guitarist for the pioneering metal band Death, passed away on December 13. After Schuldiner, who lacked medical insurance, was diagnosed with a brain tumor in 1999, the metal community came together to help pay his exorbitant medical bills by establishing the Charles Schuldiner Medical Fund. More information on the fund—which is still accepting donations to help support Schuldiner's family—can be found at hammerheartamerica.com. ...

CONGRATS TO CLAPTON: Eric Clapton rang in the new year with a New Year's Day wedding that surprised not just the media, but those in attendance at the private ceremony. According to Reverend Christopher Elson—vicar of the 15th-century Church of St. Mary Magdalen in Ripley, England—Clapton, 56, married his 25-year-old American girlfriend, graphic artist Melia McEnery (who he met in L.A. while recording *Riding with the King*) after the scheduled christening of the couple's 6-month-old daughter, Julie Rose, and Clapton's 16-year-old daughter, Ruth Patricia. As the wife of family friend and ceremony-attendee Andy Fairweather-Low told CNN, after the baptisms were performed, Elson announced, "We have two people here who want to get married, as well."

EMILY FASTEN

> MY FAVORITE GUITAR PLAYER Albert Lee



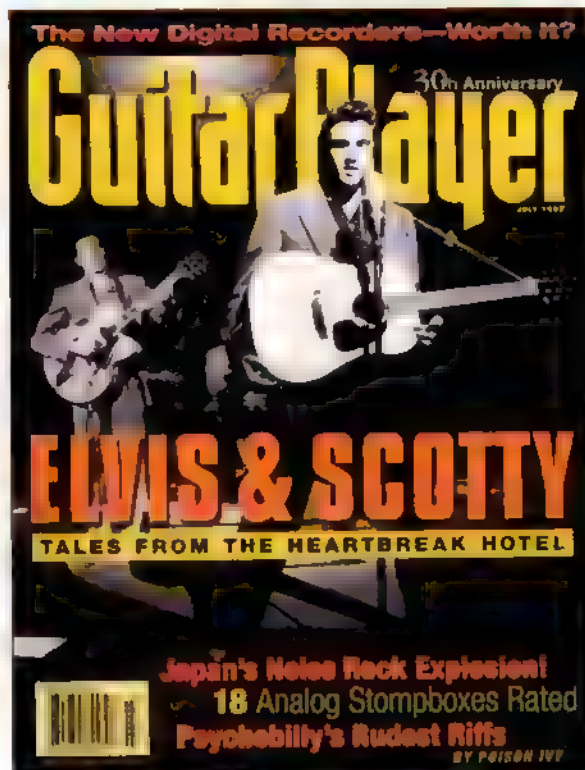
"I find it particularly difficult to pick just one issue of such a great magazine

and say it's my favorite. I'm obviously drawn to issues with articles on my favorite players—Jimmy Bryant, James Burton, Cliff Gallup, Hank Garland, and so many more who have shaped my playing. I have fond memories of playing with Jimmy and James at the Palomino Club in Los Angeles in the '70s—it was one of the highlights of my 40-odd years on the road. If I had to pick the cover that, to me, heralded the advent of cool, it

would have to be the 'Elvis & Scotty' issue [July 1997]. I also cherish my cover issue, even though the wide-angle lens made my

face look fat! Keep up the excellent work—you're the benchmark."

—ALBERT LEE, JANUARY, 2002



LEARNING CURVE

Beginning Electric Slide Guitar

For those who have never attempted it, slide guitar can seem mysterious and daunting. So it's great to have a rip-roarin' slide monster such as Kirby Kelly explain the basics. Kelly opens this 54-minute video by assuring viewers that slide guitar isn't harder than standard playing—just different. He then discusses types of slides, different ways to hold the slide, and how to set up

your guitar for slide. From there, Kelly dives into the crucial, often-overlooked skills of left- and right-hand damping. One simple, but useful muting tip is to hold your fretting-hand fingers as if they're a "paddle"—a single appendage, rather than four individual digits. Kelly also covers slide intonation and vibrato (as well as how to use the slide for hammer-ons and pull-offs), goes over

the most common slide tunings (open E, open A, and standard), shows the fingerings for open-tuning minor and major scales, and demonstrates several cool-sounding licks.

The only bummer is that none of the lessons are notated on paper—a major oversight for a beginner's video. All you get is a generic pamphlet explaining notation and tablature basics,

Since appearing in GP's October 1991 Spotlight column, Joy Basu has been an in-demand session guitarist, teacher, and sideman. He has also released a self-titled solo album (available at joybasu.com), and his music has been used in TV shows such as MTV's *Undressed* and *60 Minutes*. After stints with pop divas Coco Lee and Jennifer Lopez, Basu is currently gigging with Jessica Simpson.

How do you get these auditions?

Word of mouth. I auditioned for the Coco Lee gig and got it, and that's how Jessica Simpson's people heard about me.

How do you prepare for auditions?

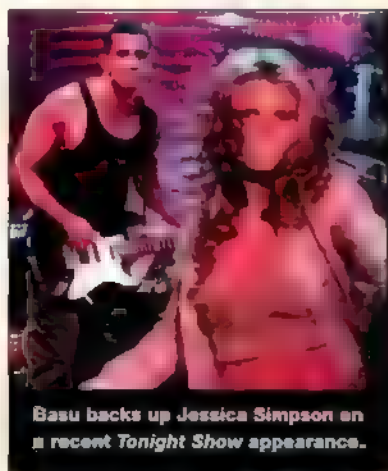
Sometimes they'll send you a CD with songs to learn, but sometimes you go in cold. It can also be a little of both. You might learn a tune, but the musical director will change the arrangement when you show up to see how well you come up with parts on your own and deal with pressure. You need to be flexible.

What gear do you bring?

Occasionally, I'll bring my own amp, but a lot of times they provide one, so I always bring a pedalboard with a wah, an envelope filter, a chorus, a delay, and two different distortion pedals.

Once you get the gig, what are the rehearsals like?

It depends on what we're rehearsing for. For a TV date, we'll spend one or



two eight-hour days just running through a couple of songs. For the last Jessica Simpson tour, the band rehearsed for a month, and then we did a week of full-production rehearsals with all the singers, dancers, and lights.

Was it hard making the transition from rock gigs to dance gigs?

Surprisingly enough, I have more freedom with Jessica than I've had on a lot of rock gigs. The musical director really wanted me to beef up the arrangements with distorted guitar and solos. I also get to cover a bunch of different styles with funk, R&B, pop, and some nylon-string work. It's a great gig. I'm having a blast.

—MATT BLACKETT



although—strangely enough—sheet music is videotaped and shown onscreen as Kelly runs through the exercises. This aside, *Beginning Electric Slide Guitar* is a great find. You couldn't ask for a much clearer introduction to slide guitar, or a more adept player as your guide.

Alfred Publishing Co., Inc.,
16320 Roscoe Blvd., Van Nuys,
CA 91410-0003; (818) 891-5999;
alfredpub.com.

—SHAWN HAMMOND



Tracking "Holy Smokes"

Album: *Mojo Blues* [Pharaoh Records]

by Will Ray

Parts: Solos.

Guitarists: Will Ray (single-note lines) and Ted Greene (chordal solo).

Guitars: "I played a Jay Turser JT-136—which is a really inexpensive copy of a Gibson ES-175," says Ray. "I have a penchant for collecting good, cheap guitars, and I saw the Turser up on eBay. When I played it, I thought, 'Whoa! This sounds and plays great.' The guitar's tone really fit 'Holy Smokes'—it has a rolled-off high end with very smooth mid and bass frequencies. Ted played a Guild with three P-90-type pickups. I don't know the model."

Amp Processor: Line 6 Pod set to "Brit Blues" and a 4x10 cabinet emulation.

Effects: Carl Martin Compressor/Limiter and Morley volume pedal (Ray).

Strings: GHS Super Steel .010 set (Ray).

Tuning: Standard.

Recording Medium: Fostex D-160 hard-disk recorder, Fostex G-16 analog 16-track. "I record directly to digital," explains Ray, "and then I transfer everything to analog for archiving and mixing. I like the warmth of analog, and the fact that nothing ever disappears on me when I have it on tape."

Creative Concept: "The song was inspired by my wife, Gayle, and the jazz-swing vibe reminds me of the first time I saw her," says Ray. "I knew I wanted to have a couple of jazz guitars wailing on the track, so I called Ted. He's the author of *Chord Chemistry*, and I took a few lessons from him a while back. I had to kind of trick him into playing a solo, because he didn't want to take any leads. I told him I just needed some good, solid rhythm tracks, and while he was recording, I started laying some parts down over the solo section. Once he got into it, he was jazzed, and he crafted a beautiful chordal solo that complements my single-note lines."

—MICHAEL MOLENDY

INTRODUCING VOX WHAT A MODELING

WHEN WE SET OUT TO CREATE VALVETRONIX, THE GOAL WAS CLEAR: design a modeling amplifier that sounded and felt great. A versatile amp that could superbly re-create every detail and subtle nuance of a collection of the world's most sought after guitar amplifiers

We realized that reaching this goal wouldn't be easy. That it would require top-notch digital technology plus a tube power amp capable of modeling the power amp sections of a ton of classic and modern tube amplifiers. We knew it would take more than our own guitar amplification expertise. We also needed the skill and experience of a high-tech equipment innovator. From this need the collaboration between VOX and Korg's ToneWorks division was born.

Together, VOX and ToneWorks have created Valvetronix—the ultimate, hybrid digital modeling amplifier that sounds, feels and operates like a traditional tube amp. The 60 Watt 1 x 12 AD60VT and stereo, 120 Watt 2 x 12 AD120VT sound just like sixteen of the finest classic and modern tube guitar amps—with no compromises or excuses.

THE FRONT END, WHERE IT ALL BEGINS!

The preamp sections of the AD60VT and AD120VT Valvetronix combos rely on Korg's proprietary REMS™ technology (Resonant structure and Electronic circuit Modeling System). REMS accurately replicates the complex circuitry in each of the modeled amplifier's signal paths, re-creating the exact tonality of those amps. Even their unique tone-stack networks have been reproduced precisely, ensuring that the Valvetronix' tone controls interact exactly as the ones on the amps they're modeling.

VALVE REACTOR™ TECHNOLOGY: THE BIG DIFFERENCE.

The power amp section—as well as the relationship and interaction between the output tubes, output transformer and speakers—is a critical part of any great tube amp. To model 16 different, legendary amplifiers, the Valvetronix' power amp has to actually change itself for each and every one.

How did we do this? By inventing a new type of modeling, tube, power amplifier. Our patented Valve Reactor power section consists of a tube power amp with an output transformer that is electronically coupled to a solid-state power circuit in such a way that the all-important relationship between the output tubes, output transformer and speakers is unaltered.



AD120VT

OPTIONAL VC-4 FOOT CONTROLLER



VALVETRONIX:TM AMP SHOULD BE.



Valve Reactor technology also has the ability to switch automatically between Class "A" and Class "AB" depending on the amplifier it's modeling. It can even select whether or not a model will have a negative feedback loop, as well as how much and what kind of feedback there will be. This adds immensely to the overall accuracy of the model's sound and feel, because you just can't accurately model a Class "A" amp that doesn't have a feedback loop—like an AC30 for example—with Class "AB" circuitry and all kinds of feedback. This is something the competition doesn't seem to grasp.

VOX's Valve Reactor technology enables the new AD60VT and AD120VT to produce the high dynamic range associated with traditional tube amps—something most solid-state power amps

simply can't do! And, because their output power can be configured exactly the same as the amps they're modeling, the AD60VT and AD120VT also do a better job of capturing the sound and feel of the amps being modeled.

VERY COOL EFFECTS BUILT-IN.

The 21 effects in the AD60VT and AD120VT aren't an afterthought. Each one is a carefully crafted model of one of a variety of coveted classic and popular effects. These include 10 stomp-box models that appear before the amp models, driving the preamp in the same way they would in a traditional setup.

The new Valvetronix combos also feature Modulation, Delay and Reverb effects sections, all of which can be used simultaneously. Just like in a pro guitar amp/rack set-up, these effects sit between the preamp and power amp sections.

THE REAL DEAL.

The VOX Valvetronix AD60VT and AD120VT give to guitarists what they've always wanted in a modeling amp—the authentic feel and genuine sound of the world's most sought after tube amplifiers! This, plus a multitude of great sounding effects, make Valvetronix the only choice for guitarists who play for real.



AD60VT

For more info go to www.voxamps.co.uk

EVERYTHING ELSE IS JUST MAKE-BELIEVE



New Gear

By Emily Fasten



1. ASHDOWN

The Peacemaker 20 (\$899), 40 (\$999, pictured), and 60 (\$1,399) are class A, all-tube combos with clean and lead/overdrive channels. Each also features footswitchable gain boost on the lead/overdrive channel, an effects loop, independent channel and master level controls, and spring reverb. The 20

comes with a 10" Celestion V10, the 40 with a 12" Celestion Vintage 30, and the 60 has a pair of Vintage 30s. The 60 is also available as a head (the 60R: \$999), with straight or angled-fronted 4x12 cabs available for \$799 each. **Ashdown**, dist. by HHB, 1410 Centinela Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90025; (310) 319-1111; hhbusa.com.

2. BURNS

Now available stateside, the Brian May Signature model (\$1,100) is a faithful replica of May's classic Red Special. It features a basswood body, a maple neck with ebony fretboard, Grover auto-locking tuners, a Strat-style tremolo with a custom-bent bar, and Burns' Tri-Sonic pickups. Controls include on/off switches for each pickup, and master tone and volume controls. Like May's original guitar, there are 24 frets, a zero fret, and a nut width of 45mm (1.77"). The guitar will initially be available



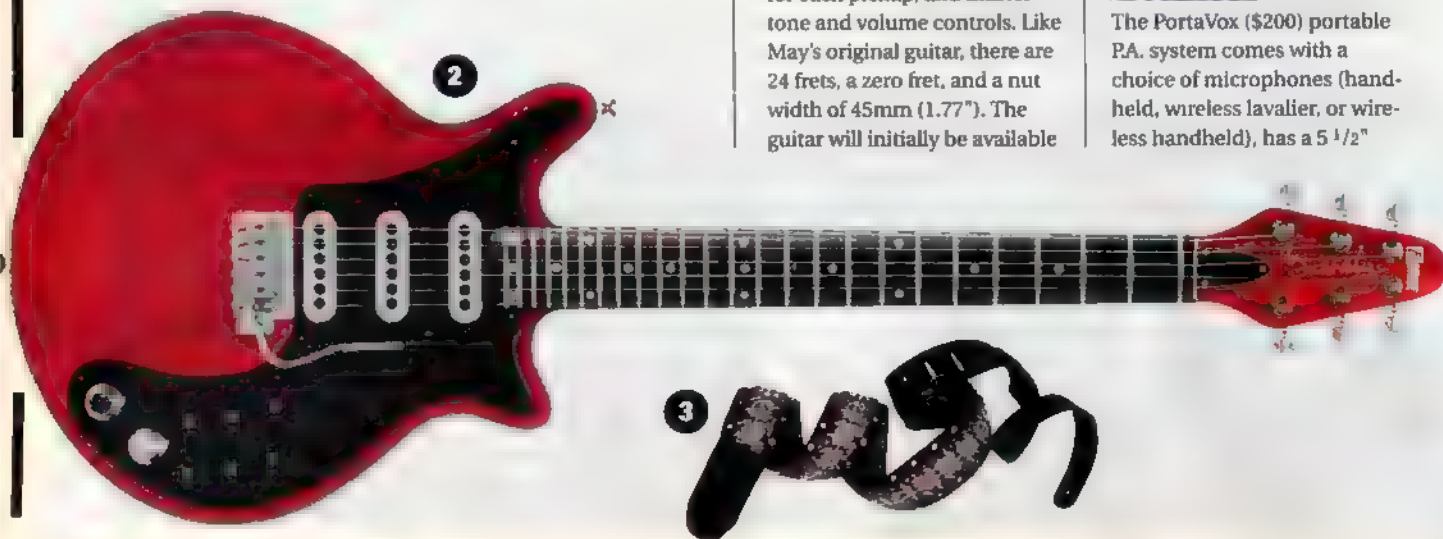
in vintage cherry and three-tone sunburst. **Burns**, dist. by Codel Enterprises, Box 269, Bethel, CT 06801, (203) 205-0056; burnsusa.com.

3. JODI HEAD

With Les Paul, Buddy Guy, Keith Richards, and Courtney Love among her customers, Jodi Head makes custom guitar straps (starting at \$1,000) that are hand beaded with Austrian and Czech crystal affixed to an adjustable leather strap. Each is unique, designed to fit the taste of the individual performer. **Jodi Head**, 104 E. 4th St., #G-4, New York, NY 10003, (212) 995-5116; jodihead.com.

4. PIGNOSE

The PortaVox (\$200) portable PA system comes with a choice of microphones (handheld, wireless lavalier, or wireless handheld), has a 5 1/2"





5

DOD

The first of several signature stompboxes from DOD, the YJM308 Yngwie Malmsteen overdrive pedal (\$99.95) features gain and level controls, and is loosely based on Yngwie's overdrive of choice, the DOD250. DOD, 8760 S. Sandy Parkway, Sandy, UT 84070; (801) 566-8800. dod.com.



speaker, and includes batteries, an AC adapter, and a shoulder strap. Two inputs are available—a 1/4" phone jack (for microphones) and an 1/8" mini-plug auxiliary input for CD players and other devices. Pignose, 3430 Precision Dr., N. Las Vegas, NV 89030; (702) 648-2444; pignoseamps.com.

5. QUICKSILVER

Luthier Ed Roman's Quicksil-

ver double-cutaway electric (\$1,395) has many custom options, but comes standard with Duncan Black Back pickups (mounted directly in the body), Sperzel tuners, and a Tone Pro Tune-o-matic-style bridge. Other options include the choice of a set or bolt-on neck made of Madagascar rosewood, and a body of either alder or basswood. Exotic woods, custom finishes, alternate electronics, and other details are available at an extra charge. Quicksilver Guitars, 155 Shortwoods Rd., New Fairfield, CT 06812; (203) 746-6116; edromanguitars.com.

6. TERRY C. MCINTURFF GUITARS

McInturff's new Taurus Sportster (\$2,695 with fixed bridge and stop tailpiece; \$2,895 with vibrato bridge) is similar to the Taurus Standard with its one-piece mahogany neck

and body, but features a mahogany top instead of a maple one. It has two pickup options—either two TCM T90 soapbars or a pair of TCM Zodiack humbuckers. Like the Standard, the Sportster has dual volume controls, a master tone control, and a 5-way pickup selector. Terry C. McInturff Guitars, 200-C Irving Parkway, Holly Springs, NC 27540; (919) 552-4586; mcinturffguitars.com.

7. FRETLOD

The Fireboard Fretlaser (\$60) is a precision laser beam that affixes to either the headstock or bridge of most standard-sized guitars and illuminates the movements of your fretting hand. Designed as an alignment and positioning aid, as well as a cool stage effect, the Fretlaser is powered by two AAA batteries, and the thickness and focus of the



7

KORG

The GA-30 Guitar/Bass tuner (\$25) has guitar and bass modes, and offers reference tones (including low B) for detuning. It also includes a Quinta Flat mode that lets you detune up to five semitones. Other features include a needle-style LCD meter, a built-in speaker, a built-in mic for acoustic instruments, and a battery life of about 100 hours. Korg, 316 South Service Rd., Melville, NY 11747; (516) 333-9100; korg.com.



6

A Winning Combo

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beam is adjustable. Dual systems (\$150) are also available for lighting both the front and back of the fretting hand. **Fretlord**, 6801 Merion Ct., N. Lauderdale, FL 33068; (954) 978-4553; fretlord.com.

B. A. DAVIS

Luthier Art Davis' new line of guitars includes the M-1

acoustic (\$1,685 and up), which features a Sitka-spruce top, mahogany back and sides, black binding, herringbone purfling and rosette, pearl fretboard inlays, and Sperzel tuners. A variety of options, including woods (East Indian or Brazilian rosewoods, Monterey cypress, koa, and walnut are among those available), bind-

ings, and pickup systems are available. **A. Davis Guitars**, 25790 Forest Dr., Escondido, CA 92026; (760) 737-3077; adavisguitars.com.

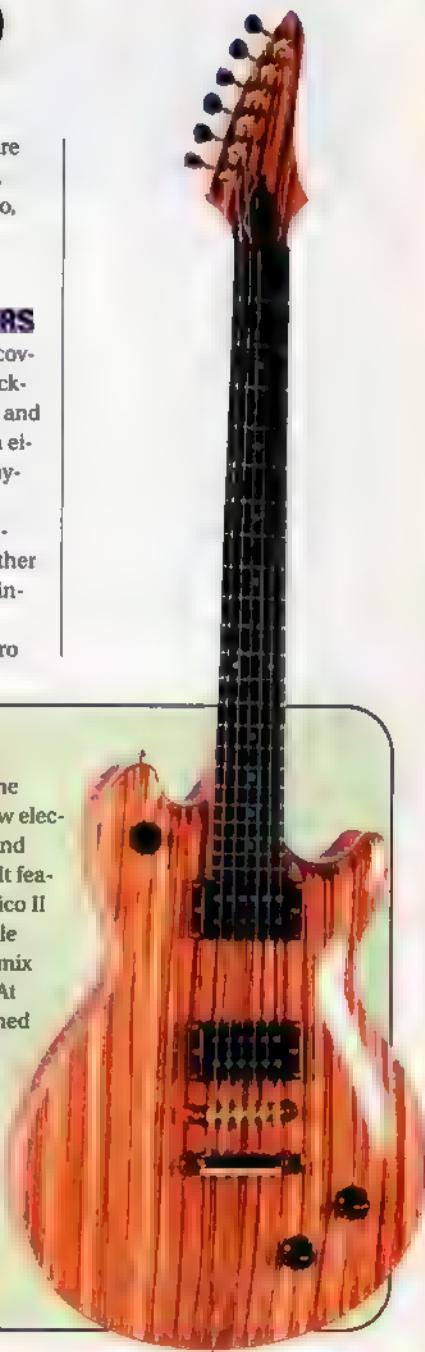
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These custom-made amp covers (\$150) have exterior pockets large enough for cables and effects, and are available in either 1050 Denier Ballistic nylon (the same stuff used in bulletproof vests) or heavy-duty, UV-resistant vinyl. Other features include leather-reinforced handles, double-stitched inside seams, Velcro



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Jeffrey Greene introduces the Quill (\$3,200), a semi-hollow electric with a zebrawood top and mahogany body and neck. It features Seymour Duncan Alnico II Pro humbuckers and a single blend control that lets you mix their output to your liking. At only 7 lbs., the Quill is finished in clear nitrocellulose lacquer and appointed with gold hardware. **Jeffrey Greene Handcrafted Guitars**, 97 James Trail, West Kingston, RI 02892; (401) 783-0109, netsense.net/~jgreene.



New Gear



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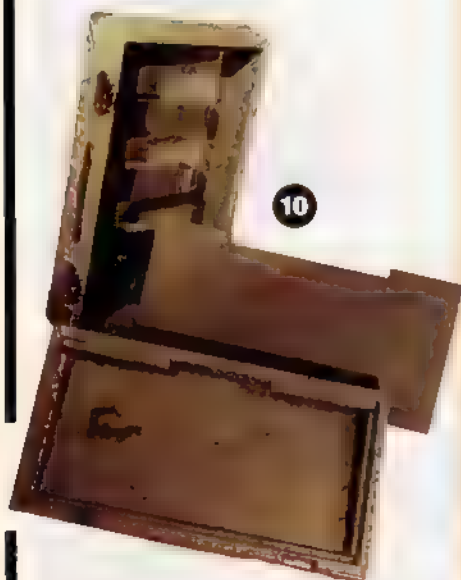
straps, and nickel-plated buckles. **Kangaroo Covers**, Box 120593, Nashville, TN 37212; (615) 361-5537; kangarooampcovers.com.

10. GIG BOX

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alboard, and the main portion of the box features a Quick Stand—an articulating guitar stand that holds three electrics and one acoustic. It has a steel handle and durable covering. **Gig Box**, dist. by ESP Corp./The Amp Doctor, 3418 Old Hickory Blvd., Ste. B1, Old Hickory, TN 37138; (615) 361-8300; gigbox.com.

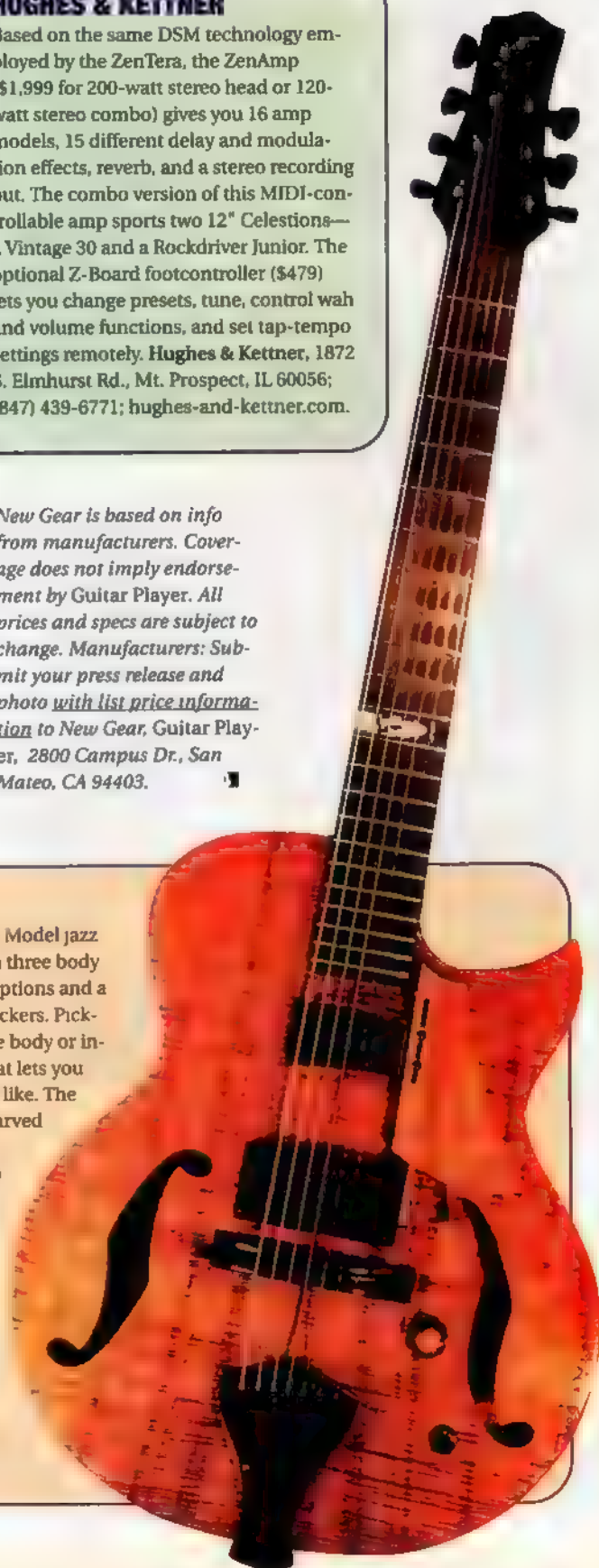
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10

LA GUITAR FACTORY

The LA Guitar Factory's Blue Model jazz guitar (\$2,295) is available in three body shapes, with various wood options and a choice of one or two humbuckers. Pickups can either be set into the body or installed on a floating track that lets you position them wherever you like. The archtop version features a carved top and back, while the radiused-top model (pictured) features a top and back that are bent to a uniform radius. You can also order a combination of the two body styles. Built by luthier Ari Lehtela, the Blue Model is available in 6- or 7-string versions. **LA Guitar Factory**, Box 691, Newell, NC 2826; (704) 599-4410; laguitarfactory.com.





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Grady Martin

1929-2001

By Rusty Russell

If the 1950s and '60s were country music's golden era, guitarist Grady Martin was the era's golden boy. Throughout those decades—and into the next—Martin's buttery-smooth sound and tasteful, inventive melodies graced hundreds of hits. For artists such as Patsy Cline, Ray Price, Marty Robbins, Loretta Lynn, Conway Twitty, and Lefty Frizzell, cutting a record without Martin in the guitar chair was unthinkable. And while the names of contemporaries Chet Atkins and Hank Garland became better known to the general public, Martin's influence on Nashville session players was enormous. In fact, hundreds of Martin's solos, intros, and fills have become part of the standard repertoire for country guitarists. And now, just months after Atkins' passing, another defining voice of the Nashville Sound has been silenced with Martin's death on December 3, 2001.

Born January 17, 1929, in Marshall County, Tennessee, Martin began playing fiddle and guitar as a boy. At 15, having talked his parents into letting him move to Nashville, he was working as a fiddler with Big Jeff & His Radio Players. At the time, Nashville had no greater claim to the moniker "Music City"



"In my case, developing licks for an artist is sort of a free-play thing with a certain amount of restriction," said Martin in the August 1966 *GP*. "I try different things, and if everyone likes something, I'll hang onto the same idea. I just look for whatever feels good, and then hope it comes off."

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Grady Martin

than Cincinnati, Chicago, or many other towns, and the Grand Ole Opry was its primary connection to country music.

"Back then, we'd play for whoever had a job to offer," says bassist Bob Moore, a lifelong friend of Martin's and a fellow member of Music Row's original "A Team" of session players. "One singer would have some road dates, and you'd go with him, and then come back and do some jobs

with someone else. Grady got a job with Red Foley, and I was working with Ray Price. Before long, Owen Bradley had his studio—the Quonset Hut—up and running, and we started cutting with Price there. This was down on 16th Avenue—the first studio on what would become known as Music Row. In '47 or '48, Grady came back to town and started working for Owen on some of the Price stuff. From that point on, he was *the* guy. Owen made him leader on the sessions. He called him his sergeant, and we all



Give your hands long-lasting freshness with "Big Red," Martin's workhorse ES-355. Note the three palm pedals for bending the E, B, and G strings.

Martin's Big Red Machine

Although Grady Martin was often photographed with a custom Bigsby solidbody sporting his name on its pickguard, his protégé Pete Wade says that, in the early '60s, Martin was loaned a modified 1960 Gibson ES-355 by guitarist/repairman Dean Porter. It's this guitar—now owned by Wade and referred to as "Big Red" by Nashville veterans—that Martin used for nearly all his subsequent session work.

"Grady got Big Red from Dean, and Dean had already done all the modifications," Wade details. "He expanded the cutaway on the treble side so high notes were easier to reach, and he flattened the fingerboard so it's just like a gut string. At some point the neck went bad, so Dean sent it back to the factory. Gibson put on a new, all-mahogany neck, and they set it in deeper than the original. The angle is different, so the bridge sits lower than a standard 355. They also added three extra frets, which required moving the neck pickup back some. It's a little brighter because of that, and that's the pickup Grady used 90 percent of the time. Dean had also made palm pedals for the guitar. One extends up under your right elbow, and lowers the pitch of the first string. The next one raises the second string, and the other one raises the third string. You can adjust them all for a whole- or half-step change. Grady didn't use them very often, just for a subtle bend now and then. The electronics are messed up, too—you have to find the front-pickup volume control's sweet spot to make all the other controls work!"

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Grady Martin

followed Grady's lead."

By the mid '50s, Martin and the other A-teamers were full-time session specialists, often playing four record dates a day. Decca signed him as a solo artist in 1955, and Martin cut roughly 170 sides for the label over the next several years. But studio work remained Martin's bread and butter. Bradley's productions accounted for the lion's share of Martin's work at the time, and the producer would often use three guitarists—Martin, Garland, and Bradley's brother, Harold. The division of labor depended on the artist, the style, and the arrangement.

"Owen knew everyone's strengths," remembers

**"When the red light
went on, Grady's
whole personality
would change,
and he'd just nail it."**

**—BOB MOORE, NASHVILLE
A-TEAM SESSION BASSIST.**

Moore. "If he was fond of the way one player sounded with, say, [steel player] Don Helms, that would become a team he'd use on certain things. In those days, you wanted every artist to have a sound you could identify from the very first note, and Grady could always come up with something that was so perfect for the song, it was almost as if the song was written around his lick. A lot of times, his best take would be on the first run-through. This was in the days before overdubbing, however, and because you had to have a good take from everyone, some of Grady's best stuff was never heard."

Session guitarist Pete Wade—a Martin disciple who teamed with him on hundreds of sessions—recalls that Martin listened to jazz guitarists such as Chuck Wayne, Barney Kessel, and Les Paul, but his favorite guitarist was Bob Wills' sideman Eldon Shamblin.

"He just loved Eldon—everything Shamblin did, Grady stole," says Wade. "Hank Garland was more into Django Reinhardt, and Hank would take a whole bunch of notes and make them fit. But Grady could take just one or two notes and make the most out of that. Technique-wise, Grady always played at a real low volume. He used a stiff pick called a Milton G. Wolf, and when he played, he didn't strike the string straight on. He'd slant the pick down with his thumb, so the sound was warmer, and the notes would just jump out. He had a couple of blackface Fender Twin Reverbs that stayed in different studios. He'd face right into the amp, and he always had an Echoplex tape unit hooked up—but it had to be on the floor away from the mic, because it made too much noise. His left hand was something to watch, too. Absolutely smooth, like he'd played whatever lick he was playing a thousand times."

It was the 1959 Marty Robbins hit "El Paso" that became Martin's best-known recording. Martin's prominent, Spanish-flavored lines ring with such authenticity and passion that many listeners think they're hearing gut-string parts, but they were actually played on an Epiphone archtop acoustic that belonged to Robbins.

In addition to his work with the icons of country, Martin worked with seminal rock 'n' roll artists such as Buddy Holly, Roy Orbison, and Johnny Burnette and the Rock & Roll Trio. Eventually, as a new group of producers and players worked their way into the scene, his session work began falling off. In 1978, Martin was hired for a brief stint with Jerry Reed. Soon after, he took a job touring and recording with Willie Nelson—a gig he kept until retiring due to health problems in 1994.

"Everyone from my generation—and I mean everyone—took a lot from Grady," says Wade. "So for those who came along after, whatever they got from us, they got from him. In my mind, he's the best there ever was, and there'll never be another like him."

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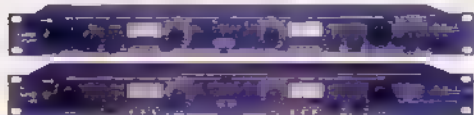


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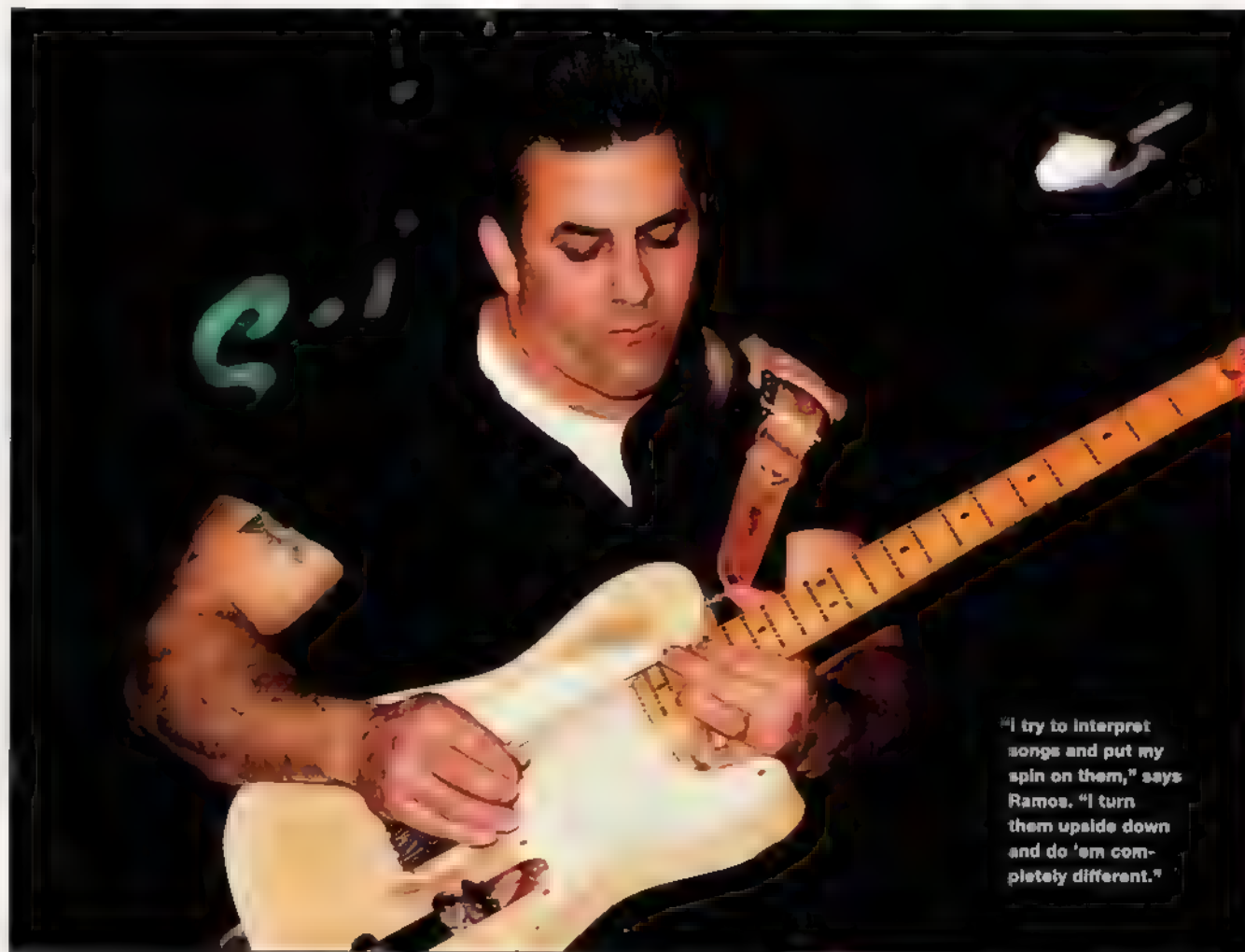
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Kid Ramos

West Coast Blues Thunder



"I try to interpret songs and put my spin on them," says Ramos. "I turn them upside down and do 'em completely different."

By Art Thompson

Getting noticed in today's crowded blues scene is challenging to say the least, but with his jet-black pompadour and weight-lifter build, Kid Ramos stands out like a sumo wrestler at a quilting bee. But even with four albums under his belt—not to mention the exposure he gets playing with the Fabulous Thunderbirds—Ramos concedes it's still difficult to make it as a solo blues artist. "It takes a good in-

heritance to be successful," he says. "It's tough out there, and you can starve trying to maintain a career. And so many people are playing blues now that it's essential to find your own voice."

Sage words from a guy whose guitar style sounds like a cross between Freddie King, Guitar Slim, Jimmie Vaughan, and T. Bone Walker. Ramos' new release, *Greasy Kid Stuff* [Evidence], is a streamlined blues romp that finds the 42-

year-old guitarist hammering down with shimmering, horn-like tones. His bare-knuckled phrasing draws from a deep well of blues styles, but the way he puts everything together is startlingly original. Ramos is completely in his element on the album, backing a bevy of singers/harp players that includes Charlie Musslewhite, Rick Estrin, James Harman, Rod Piazza, Paul deLay, Johnny Dyer, and Lynwood Slim. *Greasy Kid*

Stuff is a jump-blues jam-fest par excellence, and it's also one of the coolest guitar records of the year.

Born in 1959 in Fullerton, California, David "Kid" Ramos grew up in a musical family. His mother and stepfather were professional opera singers, and, as a youngster, Ramos often watched them perform at a local restaurant. His stepfather—who worked with the New

continued on page 46

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Gilby Clark

Staying True to His Roots

By Shawn Hammond

While Axl Rose continues to push the new Guns N' Roses towards industrial music, former GN'R rhythm guitarist Gilby Clarke remains true to the raw, classic-rock roots that thrust the band into the spotlight in the first place. His new solo album, *Swag* (Spitfire), is packed with greasy guitars and hedonistic tunes that showcase Clarke's songwriting and vocal skills.

"Guitar players tend to forget that vocals are what draw people into a song," he says. "Even when they're also the singer, they'll concentrate way more on recording and playing the guitar, and their vocal melodies tend to mirror their guitar lines. But if you make the vocal and guitar melodies *different*, they'll intertwine and make the song flow. Sometimes it's a good idea to start writing around a simple, folk chord progression before you bring in the riffs."

Clarke also looks to different grooves for inspiration. "To give songs a different feel, I'll often use interesting drum beats to push me somewhere new," he explains. "'Margarita' was a complete feel song—I wrote the song around a Latin beat I had heard—and 'Broken Down Car' was built around Gene Krupa's rumbling beat on Benny Goodman's 1936 hit 'Sing, Sing, Sing.' My favorite solo on the album is on that song, too. It has a bit of a rockabilly sound, and I love the tone. I used my '68 Tele with a bridge-position



Gilby Clarke

PAF through a '62 Vox AC50 head and a '69 Marshall basketweave cab loaded with Celestion Greenbacks. Whenever I needed a bell-like, clean tone on the album, I used that setup."

"Crocodile Tears" finds Clarke squeezing some sweet chicken-pickin' into his testosterone-fueled rock. "Over the last four or five years, I've been playing stuff I wouldn't call country—because I could never admit to that—but it *is* Stones-y sounding," he says. "Some parts have to be slow and sleazy, and plucking with your fingers is the only way to get that feel. To get that grungy tone, I also used a Danelectro 56-U2. That's my noisiest guitar. It

doesn't stay in tune, but it just has this *dirt*."

Other guitars used on the album include a stock '91 Gibson Les Paul Classic ("the workhorse"), a Zemaitis single-cutaway with Duncan '59s (used for most solos), and a 1971 Martin D-35. Clarke strings his guitars with Ernie Ball RPS .011s, and prefers .96mm D'Andrea round-triangle picks.

For most of his solos, a '62 Fender Deluxe was the amp of choice, and for dirty rhythm tracks, Clarke used a Marshall JCM800. "I mike amps the same way I always have—I choose a speaker, point a Shure SM57 at the center of the cone, and then put a Sennheiser 409 right next to the SM57," says Clarke. "The 57 is the best guitar mic ever made, but the 409 adds a little

bit of bottom. With that setup I rarely have to add EQ from the board. Between the two mics, I get everything I need." Effects were kept to a minimum—Clarke used a Marshall Bluesbreaker, a CryBaby wah, and an MXR Phase 90.

Although it has been nine years since Clarke left Guns N' Roses, he still values what he learned during his tenure. "I never noticed this until I was in GN'R and learning their songs" he says, "but their solo sections are *always* a new part of the song. Too many people get locked into soloing over a verse or a chorus, but Slash never does—and I love that. Ever since I started doing my own albums, I've tried to make the solo section a part you've never heard before. That really helps the solo stand out. Also, I *always* improvise solos. I just keep doing takes until one feels good."

Although he works hard to keep his playing fresh and interesting, Clarke isn't concerned with breaking new ground on his solo records. In fact, he admits that he makes albums mostly to have a reason to tour. "I still love standing up in front of a crowd," he says, "and strapping on my guitar, and hitting that first chord."

Kid Ramos

continued from page 43

York Metropolitan Opera—bought a gas station in Anaheim after retiring from show business. One day, the elder Ramos purchased a guitar and amp from a customer, and, at age eight, Kid was playing electric. Ramos spent his teenage years practicing, playing parties, and breaking into the club scene. In 1980, he started playing with vocalist James Harman—a gig that Ramos cites as a turning point in his career.

"Harman had an unbelievable record collection," says Ramos, "and he would make me tapes so I could hear all these different styles. I didn't have the patience to sit down and learn one guy note-for-note, so I tried to get a little bit of each thing and incorporate it into my own style. Joining the James Harman band—and being exposed to all those records—was really the basis of it all for me."

Ramos improved rapidly playing six to seven night a week in Harman's band, often opening for groups such as X, Oingo Boingo, the Blasters, and the Plimsouls. And when Harman added guitarist Hollywood Fats to the band in 1983, Ramos' learning curve got another boost. "Fats was a Jewish guy from Santa Monica who was both a child prodigy and a walking encyclopedia of blues guitar," says Ramos. "As a teenager, he played with John Lee Hooker, J.B. Hutto, Albert King, and Muddy Waters. Fats could play every blues style imaginable and make it sound like his own. Here I was, 22 years old, and playing with a guy who was a living legend on the West

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Hollywood Fats died unexpectedly in 1986, and, two years later, Ramos left the James Harman band. He got married, took a job as a water-delivery man, and settled into family life

Kid's Stuff

Kid Ramos picked an assortment of new and old guitars for *Greasy Kid Stuff*, including a '59 Fender Esquire, a reissue Epiphone ES-5, a Mexican-made Fender '57 reissue Strat, an old Supro Resophonic, and a '57 Harmony Stratotone Newport.

"The Stratotone is basically a big slab of wood that sounds like a jazz box," says Ramos. "The neck is huge, and it goes straight through the body. The sides are just glued on. There's no trussrod, either, and that may also have something to do with its sound. I used the Stratotone on 'Mean Old Lonesome Train' and 'Devil's Foot' for that Charlie Christian tone."

Ramos plugged his electrics into a reissue Fender '63 Reverb, which, in turn, drove one of three Fender amps—a '50s Pro, an early-'60s 3x10 Bandmaster (which he favors for its excellent tremolo), and an EL84-powered Pro Junior. "I used the Pro Junior more than anything else," Ramos details. "It's an amazing amp. We put three mics on it—one in the back, one close to the speaker, and another a few feet away."

Ramos strings his guitars with D'Addario .011-.052 sets, and plays with either a Fender heavy pick or his fingers. For slide playing, he uses a piece of brass tubing.

Whether playing with the Thunderbirds or fronting his own band, Ramos' bright, husky tone is a standout element of his style. "I've been using Vox AC30s onstage for about four or five years," he says. "I don't see many blues players with them, but there's something about that class-A sound that gets it for me. I don't use any pedals—just the Fender reverb unit. I like to have that clarity where the sound isn't all mushed out, and the reverb in front of the amp is the secret weapon." —AT

For the next seven years, Ramos kept up his chops playing occasional gigs, but turned down any offers—including one from Roomful of Blues—that demanded a full-time commitment. He eventually grew weary of the nine-to-five grind, however, and started performing and recording regularly in the Los Angeles area with vocalist Lynwood Slim. In 1994, the duo cut *Too Small to Dance* under the name Big Rhythm Combo, and a year later, Ramos released his first solo album, *Two Hands, One Heart*. Soon after, Kim Wilson of the Fabulous Thunderbirds invited Ramos to join the band.

"I'd been a Thunderbirds fan ever since I first saw them in 1978," says Ramos. "I was helping a friend move back here from the East Coast,

and we just happened to walk into this club where the Thunderbirds were playing. I watched them do three sets, and I was floored. I thought, 'Man, this is it' I'm a big fan of Jimmie Vaughan and Duke Robillard, and, obviously, those were some big shoes to fill. I decided when I joined the Thunderbirds that I'd just do what I do and not think about it too much."

Ramos says he doesn't go out of his way to make his albums sound like the classic recordings that inspire him, it just happens that way. "I like it when a session feels like a live gig," he says. "So all of my stuff is cut to tape with everyone playing in one big room. That's probably the biggest reason why my albums all sound like they were recorded in 1958."



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Precious Bryant

Blues from the Heart

By Andy Ellis

When Precious Bryant bears down on her Epiphone Howard Roberts, it sounds as if there's a guitar and washtub bass accompanying her sweet, sassy vocals. On her first album, *Fool Me Good* [Terminus], the Georgia native's sly fingerpicking and snappy chording sounds like a hopped-up Mississippi John Hurt laced with a liberal dose of Chuck Berry. And while most blues soloists pluck an acoustic flat-top or resonator guitar, Bryant prefers an electric hollowbody. "I'm like Stevie Ray Vaughan," she laughs. "I like my music loud."

At age 60, Bryant is one of the last living links to a vibrant folk-blues tradition that emerged from the southwest region of Georgia. Born into a musical family, Bryant was exposed to guitar at an early age. "My uncle George Henry had a big ol' guitar that I used to drag around," she reveals. "Then my grandma bought me my own guitar, and I got started by watching my daddy and uncle play. My daddy used to put the guitar behind his head and do the buck dance while he was playing. He got things from older guitarists he heard on the gramophone, like Blind Boy Fuller, but I learned my songs off



"Not only is Precious one of the last, she is no doubt one of the best who ever sang and played this spirited style of folk blues," says folklorist George Mitchell, who first recorded Bryant (pictured with her Epiphone Howard Roberts) in 1969.

Precious Bryant

the radio. I'd hear Otis Redding, B.B. King, Muddy Waters, John Lee Hooker, Jimmy Reed, and Elmore James."

Bryant's version of "Georgia Buck" is a fingerpicking *tour de force*. Imagine Elizabeth Cotton's "Freight Train" enhanced with bluesy quarter-bends and slapped upright bass—all played on a solo 6-string—and you'll be in the ballpark. "That tune came from my daddy," recalls Bryant. "It was called 'The Buck' when he did it. I added a little more to it myself." Bryant's bouncy, driving sound stems from her vigorous, two-digit picking technique. "They call that the dog finger," laughs Bryant, holding up her index

finger. "I just use it and my thumb. I learned to pick like that on my own."

In addition to being a gifted guitarist, Bryant is an inspired songwriter. Six of the 15 songs on *Fool Me Good* are originals, including the brisk boogie "Don't You Wanna Jump" and the stride-piano inflected "Wadn't I Scared." "Those are the first two songs I ever wrote," she states. "I'll be lying in bed about 3 o'clock in the morning, and I'll just think of some words. I'll write them down and put music to them later."

The antithesis of a career-oriented musician, Bryant simply plays to make herself and others happy, performing for family and friends with occasional forays to folk and blues festivals. Her music exudes an impish joy, and

even when she sings Blind Willie McTell's "Broke and Ain't Got a Dime," you can imagine it's with a twinkle in her eyes. "I don't ever want to get to where I can't play my guitar," says Bryant. "I love it, love it, love it." ■

Special thanks to folklorists Cathy and Jake Fussell for conducting and taping Bryant's interview.

Living Room Blues

Precious Bryant plays an Epiphone Howard Roberts hollowbody electric selected for her by Taj Mahal, and provided by Music Maker Relief Foundation after a fire destroyed her home several years ago. She strings her guitar with a D'Addario .009 set, and has decorated it with stickers that spell "Precious Blues" and "Music." She sports plastic picks on her thumb and index finger.

As rural blues is typically recorded in fields, on porches, or in homes—rather than in a formal studio—producer Amos Harvey tracked *Fool Me Good* in a neighbor's living room. "It was the most comfortable environment for Precious," says Harvey, "and the home-cooked food didn't hurt, either. With thick-curtained windows, a carpeted floor, two quilt-covered couches, and a wooden shelf full of old books, we had a natural acoustic environment."

To maximize Bryant's sonic mojo, Harvey and engineer Steve Beatty miked both her guitar and a solid-state Fender Jam 1x12 combo. To capture the percussive jangle of her strumming, Beatty crossed a pair of Audix SCX-One omnidirectional condenser mics about 40" from the guitar. For low-end girth, he positioned a Neumann U87 behind the amp. Bryant sang into Audix VX-10 and SCX-One condensers. All the mics fed dbx 586 tube preamps, which were connected directly to a Tascam DA-78 24-bit digital multitrack.

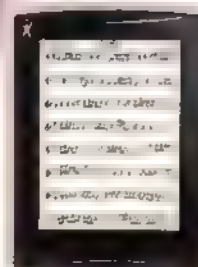
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Pickups

Glenn Tilbrook

"I always work out my solos," admits smart-pop songwriter Glenn Tilbrook, "because I have to make sure the lines are tuneful and melodically interesting enough to help the song become something you'll find appealing over and over again. In the context of the music I write, I can't just riff away on whatever strikes me at the moment."

As a member of Squeeze—and with his Brian Wilson-meets-Ray Davies compositional sense and ultra-melodic guitar playing—Tilbrook was the musical engine for pop classics such as "Tempted," "Another Nail in My Heart," and "Black Coffee in Bed." In 2000, Squeeze called it quits and Tilbrook embarked on a solo career. His new record, *The Incomplete Glenn Tilbrook*

[Quixotic], displays an expanded guitar style—an evolution Tilbrook traces to playing solo-acoustic shows.

"Arranging my songs for solo performance taught me a lot about the role of the guitar in my music," he says. "For instance, I wrote the Squeeze song 'Temptation for Love' with very elaborate keyboard parts that sounded unlike anything I would have come up with on the guitar. But when I arranged the song for solo acoustic, I realized the keyboard bits actually worked better as guitar riffs."

For *The Incomplete Glenn Tilbrook*, Tilbrook relied on Taylor 6- and 12-string acoustics, and the '67 B-Bender-equipped Fender Tele he used in his Squeeze days. (His backup is a '54 Tele that was a gift from Elvis



"A lot of guitarists will say there are no rules," says Daniel Ash, "but then they'll be fearful and dismissive of new sounds, new music, and unconventional creative methods."

Costello.) Other instruments included a '68 Gibson ES-175 and a Les Paul Studio, and a Gretsch Country Gentleman. Tilbrook's amps were a Mesa/Boogie Mark I and a Dual Rectifier, and a Fend-

er Bassman, and his effects setup consisted of a Dunlop Cry-Baby and two Boss compressors (one set for heavy compression and sustain, and the other dialed in for a milder squeeze).

"For me, songwriting has always been a product of working really hard to get those inspirational moments," relates Tilbrook. "It's easy to tell when something is really good or really bad—it's the bits that are in-between that are tough."

—DARRIN FOX

Daniel Ash

"Compared to what's going on in dance culture, bands are boring," states former Bauhaus, Tones on Tail, and Love and Rockets guitarist Daniel Ash. "I don't want to be in a band anymore—it's a very cliched, old-fashioned way of working."

Abandoning the collaborative creativity of the rehearsal hall for the introspection of the recording studio, Ash formed



"The single biggest thing I've learned is to keep at it," says Glenn Tilbrook of composing. "When you're onto a good song, some form of inspiration inevitably kicks in."

Pickups

his self-titled new release [Psychobaby] from drum loops, and abandoned conventional song structures for linear, groove-based sonic excursions. But although Ash locked himself away to play most of the instruments himself, *Daniel Ash* is far from a sterile display of self-indulgence and digital-editing gymnastics. The songs are dynamic and powerful, and the guitars are sensational—a thrilling blend of post-modern tonalities, roots-rock homages, and fusillades of noise and feedback. It's hard to believe guitars were often the *last* priority in the creative process.

"Everything used to start with me writing a song on an acoustic guitar," says Ash. "But

now, most of my inspiration comes from a drum loop. Then, I'll put down a bass line, and only after the groove is established will I begin working out guitar parts. I like reacting to loops because they force me onto a different path—it's about keeping the groove interesting rather than negotiating the same old intro-verse-chorus format. I prefer it when songs sound unconventional."

As much as Ash embraced innovation, however, one of the album's most evocative songs was birthed the old-school way. "When I recorded 'Walk on the Moon,' it wasn't a good period of my life," he relates. "I was pretty broke, and I spent my last \$1,000 for a week in the studio. I put myself on the line to

get something out, and that song came from that week of desperation. While the studio engineer was setting something up, I absent-mindedly strummed some mutilation of the chords from [Bob Dylan's] 'Lay Lady Lay' and those magical chords provided the breakthrough I needed. I soon had the thematic, descending guitar line for 'Walk on the Moon,' and I was saved!"

To produce the album's cavalcade of guitar timbres, Ash used two Sustainer-equipped Fernandes models—a Revolver Standard and a Native Pro—plugged into either a Line 6 Pod or an H&H IC100S amp through a 4x12 Marshall cabinet. Effects came courtesy of the Pod's onboard processing, a volume pedal, and a Danelectro Dan-O-Wah. Ash's strings are Ernie Ball 010-.046 sets.

"If you want to move with the times, you have to accept where music is *right now*," asserts Ash. "Otherwise, you're going to sound like Deep Purple or something—and what's the point of that? Today, it's all about dance music, and I don't understand why some guitarists fear that culture. It's just another sound. I don't find it any different than when electric guitars started making the scene decades ago. I'm sure the era's acoustic players *hated* the electric guys, but look where we are now."

MICHAEL MOLENDRA



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Pickups

Robert Bradley's Blackwater Surprise

When Detroit-based street musician Robert Bradley teamed with a group of young alterna-rockers back in the mid '90s, fans and critics alike responded to the fresh spin they put on R&B. After three albums and several tours, however, Bradley and his band Blackwater Surprise were released by RCA, and founding members Andrew and Michael Nehra left to pursue their own project. Undaunted, Bradley enlisted the 6-string talents of ex-Mog Stunt Team guitarist Matthew "Mutt" Ruffino, and started recording demos for the current release, *New Ground* (Vanguard).

"I think this album sounds a little more contemporary," says Bradley. "We're still mixing R&B flavors with rock and funk, but Matthew is really a rock player, so there's more of an edge."

"It's my job to make the music cosmic," adds Ruffino. "The earlier albums sound more traditional, but this time around we were more open to experimenting."

The experiments on *New Ground* included Ruffino's first ever use of an EBow on "See Her." "The song is in the key of B, but I tuned down a half-step so I could solo in C," he says. "That allowed me to bounce off the open G with

my EBow part."

Things got weirder still for the machine-gun riffs of "Profile." "What you're hearing there," explains Ruffino, "is a feedback track I cut with a Les Paul through a Dr. Z amp. The engineer rigged it up so our keyboardist could control when the feedback came in—you couldn't hear my guitar until he hit a key." The resulting noise-gate-type effect created the stuttering blasts of guitar that lead into the chorus.

Elsewhere on *New Ground*, Ruffino played a Gretsch Country Gentleman (into a Matchless Chieftain), a scalloped-neck Fender Strat, and his main touring guitar, a Yamaha Pacifica (strung with Everly strings, gauged .010-.046). Bradley contributed the acoustic parts on "Willy Lee" and "Young Girls."

Ruffino was a fan of the band before he was asked to become a member, and he jumped at the chance to add his flavor to Bradley's musical stew. "Before I joined," says Ruffino, "I played everything from reggae to blues to speed metal to jazz—I wanted to be able to express myself at any given moment. I feel like I can do that with this band."

For the 52-year-old Bradley—who toiled in obscurity for many years—Blackwater Surprise enables him to get his tunes to more people than ever. "The studio is great, but meeting the folks who enjoy this music is my whole thing. As long as I'm not six feet under, I'll be playing for the people."

—MATT BLACKETT



Guitarist Matthew "Mutt" Ruffino (far right) helped push Robert Bradley's Blackwater Surprise towards "cosmic rock."

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The Star Room Boys

I grew up listening almost exclusively to rock and roll," says Phillip McArdle of honky-tonkers the Star Room Boys. "I'd never played country, so when I joined this band I had to pick up the style pretty fast."

Thankfully, McArdle is a quick study. The Star Room Boy's sophomore effort, *This World Just Won't Leave You Alone* (Slew-foot) shows he has become a country player with impeccable taste and style. For McArdle, his crash course in honky-tonk not only let him thrive in the confines of the group's George Jones-style tear jerkers, it also gave him a new outlook on the guitar.

"With country guitar, there's

a way your hands interact with the instrument that isn't there in a lot of rock playing," he explains. "You can really hear the subtleties, such as the change in tone you get by simply moving your pick around on different areas of the string. You can make the same note sound aggressive or tentative. That's something I would have never learned without listening to country guitar."

To record *This World*, McArdle had to shelve his main amp—a '74 Fender Vibrosonic ("It just wasn't very exciting when it got to tape," he laments)—in favor of a couple of Ampeg Gemini combos and a Supro. His main guitars are a '68 Fender Thinline Tele loaded with Bill Lawrence pickups and a G&L.



"I've immersed myself in country guitar so much, that now it's just the way I play," says the Star Room Boy's Phillip McArdle.

ASAT Jr. Onstage, his only effect is a Boss CS-3 compressor. "That pedal allows me to really tug on the strings without producing too much volume," he says.

As an understated player with mean chops, McArdle can choose the way he wants to make a statement. "The hot-rod Tele thing can get hard on your ears after a while," he says. "I want my guitar parts to stick out and grab the listener, but I don't want to sound like a show-off."

DARRIN FOX



"I love the counterpoint that AC/DC and Creedence use," says the Candy Butchers' Mike Viola. "We really tried to apply that to our latest record."

Candy Butchers

I write the songs," says Candy Butchers guitarist Mike Viola. "I don't think about how I want them to sound until I get with the band." The band's sound on the Butchers' second studio album, *Play with Your Head* (RPM/Columbia), turned out to be a mixture of the Pretenders, the Beatles, and U2—with nods to Bob Dylan and Tom Waits. For Viola, creating that kind of record meant laying back, playing less, and letting the arrangements breathe.

"I thought a lot about leaving space," he says. "I didn't do many overdubs, and you can

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really hear the ones I did. On our first record, I didn't understand that principle. I would stack things harmonically, but not necessarily tonally, so there was a lot of frequency masking going on. It was also harder to recreate all the parts live. This time, I thought, 'We're a trio, so why make a record that doesn't sound like a trio?'

To conjure the album's tones, Viola relied mostly on the Harrison-approved rig of a '64 Gretsch Tennessean into a Vox AC30. ('I like the continuity of sticking to a basic setup,' he says.) For acoustic textures, Viola pressed a 1954 small-bodied Gibson into service. Throughout the album, Viola managed to do a lot with a little, and worked to create big sounds without resorting to massive layering. 'I used an old Stones trick on 'Let Her Get Away,' where I tuned down a whole step and used a capo,' he explains. 'Then I tuned back up, capoed higher on the neck, and played the exact same notes—different strings, but the same pitches. Something amazing happens to the sound when you double parts that way.'

Viola was aided in the production of *Play with Your Head* by über-engineer Bob Clearmountain, who, despite his squeaky-clean sonic reputation, was more than willing to exploit the rough edges of Viola's playing. 'Bob liked the fact that some of my stuff was noisy,' says Viola. 'In fact, in 'Baby It's a Long Way Down' he had me stand in front of my amps with a P-90 Les Paul. The hum and squealing was really loud, but we brought it down in the mix so it just adds this weirdness.'

The ascending slide at the end of the 'Dome' solo is another example of lo-fi ingenuity. 'I didn't hold the last bend long enough,' says Viola, 'so we tried to stretch it out with time expansion in Pro Tools. That re-

ally degenerated the sound in a cool way. Even though we're pop, we have some punk roots, and I guess that's where the noisy influence comes from. It's a little less fun when the tracks sound too clean.' —MATT BLACKETT

Volta Do Mar

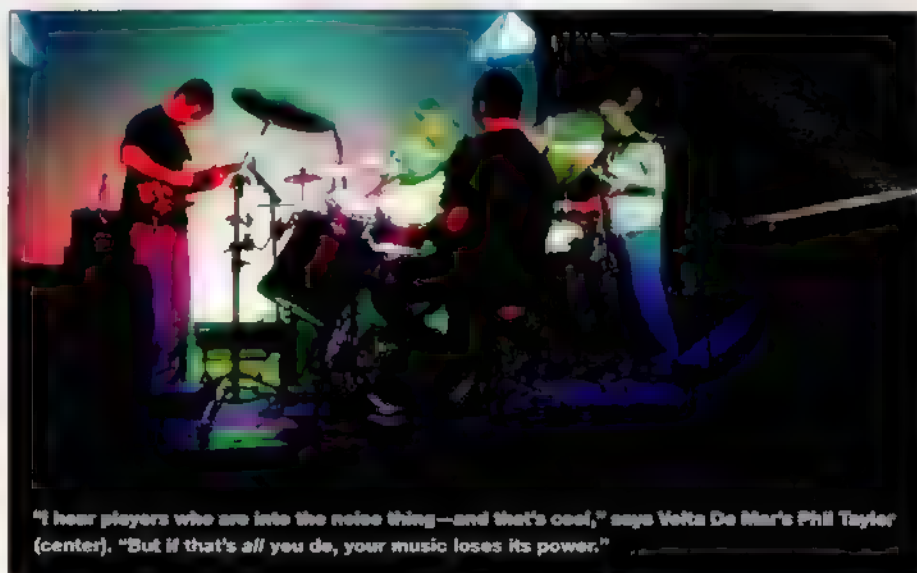
With complex arrangements, stark soundscapes, and a penchant for improvisation, Chicago's experimental-rock quartet Volta Do Mar offer an alternative to instrumental guitar music. The group's second album, *At the Speed of Light or Day* (Arbortvite), demonstrates how guitarist Phil Taylor cunningly creates atmosphere and texture with a stripped-down clean tone. Never resorting to swirls of delays or loops, Taylor creates lush beds of sound with cascading arpeggio figures.

'With my right hand I use a combination of pick and fingers to create these rolling patterns,' he explains. 'I got that technique from listening to Leo Kottke, Charley Patton, and John Fahey records, and it opened up a ton of creative possibilities for me—especially when I'm into such a straightforward sound. For example, I'm fanatical about Keith Jarrett's solo piano albums from the '70s because he's just one guy on the piano making so much sound. I try to bring that level of intensity into my style.'

Obviously, Taylor's rig mirrors his stripped-down approach. He simply plugs a Fender Strat (loaded with a Seymour Duncan bridge humbucker) into a Dunlop CryBaby, a Boss delay, and a Yamaha T-100 amp.

'When I see guys who have 10 pedals on the floor, all I see are 10 patch cords that can go bad at any time,' says Taylor. 'I try to get as much out of my simple rig as possible.'

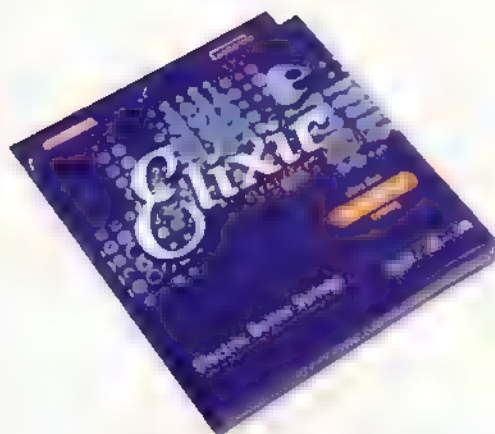
—DARRIN FOX



"I hear players who are into the noise thing—and that's cool," says Volta Do Mar's Phil Taylor (center). "But if that's all you do, your music loses its power."

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"We create moments in the live set where we can improvise," says John Petrucci, "and those are the fun parts of the show. It's also where our songs come from."



PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEVE JENNINGS

PROUD TO BE PROG

DREAM THEATER'S JOHN PETRUCCI

SCORCHES THROUGH *Six Degrees of Inner Turbulence*

You don't have to be a progressive-rock freak to name the genre's grand masters—Pink Floyd, Yes, Rush, ELP, King Crimson, and Genesis. But since the glory days of these giants, the only prog band to command the same level of repute has been Dream Theater. Combining ridiculous chops, grandiose arrangements, and epic

stories with a heavier edge and modern tones, Dream Theater pays homage to their influences while blazing a trail all their own. In the process they've almost single-handedly carried the genre into the new millennium. ■ Prog prominence didn't come easy, however. Although founders John Petrucci, Mike Portnoy > > >

BY SHAWN HAMMOND

PROUD TO BE PROG

(drums), and John Myung (bass) hit it off immediately when they met at Berklee College of Music in 1985, they have been plagued by personnel changes. In fact, the band went through so many singers they considered going totally instrumental. Things weren't much easier with keyboardists. The group's original keyboard player, Kevin Moore, left after its third album—the dark and heavy *Awake*—in 1994. Then ex-Kiss/Alice Cooper keyboardist Derek Sherinian was recruited for three albums: 1995's *A Change of Seasons*, 1997's *Falling into Infinity*, and 1998's *Once in a Lifetime*.

A turning point came in 1998, when Petrucci

and Portnoy tapped bass ace Tony Levin and ex-Dixie Dregs keyboard whiz Jordan Rudess for a side project called Liquid Tension Experiment. By the time the second LTE album was finished in mid '99, Portnoy and Petrucci were convinced they'd finally found the perfect Dream Theater keyboardist in Rudess. Four months later, the band emerged from the studio with the double-CD concept album *Scenes from a Memory*.

This year's *Six Degrees of Inner Turbulence* [Elektra] is another double album—this one featuring an eight-part, 42-minute title track. And while some might consider prog passe, Steve Vai and Joe Satriani thought enough of Petrucci's technique, stature, and relevance that they asked him to join the last G3 tour.

• • • • •

Did Six Degrees start as a double-album concept?

No, it blossomed into that. We started writing in the studio, and the songs were coming out long, of course [laughs]. When we realized how long the project was going to be, we thought another double album would be a cool follow up to *Scenes*—which did so well for us. We thought, "Nobody is doing double albums now, so it'll be a nice contrast to what's out there."

Have you guys always composed in the studio?

No, *Scenes* was the first time. We'd just done Liquid Tension that way, and we loved the spontaneity and the energy. The studio environment is really cool—you're all set up and you have these great sounds—so it's the perfect environment for creativity.

Dream Theater has written epic works and very un-prog-like concise songs. How do you reconcile both approaches?

It's a delicate balance. Early on, our writing style was a bit immature. We were young guys who were into Rush and Yes, and we'd write these long instrumentals and just put vocals on top. When I think about that now, I kind of laugh. But one of the things we liked about that approach was that spirit where you don't know what to expect next. But now we've matured and we're much more aware of the big picture. We understand the importance of the lyrics and the vocals, and how all the instruments interact.

How has having three different keyboardists in Dream Theater changed the band's approaches to composing and performing?

The keyboard player has always been an integral part of our sound because we have a lot of lines that are interwoven, doubled, and harmonized between the guitar and keyboards. So each guy's style completely influenced the way songs came out. They all came from different backgrounds, but Jordan is perfect for this band.

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It's pretty incredible. When we're writing, sometimes he doesn't even have his keyboard—he just writes his part straight to paper.

Let's talk about your solo in "Blind Faith" on the new record—are you playing a baritone guitar?

Yeah, it's a 6-string Ernie Ball Silhouette Bass Guitar with a 29 ⁵/₈" scale. Sterling Ball gave me one and told me to tune it up a fourth, to A. At the time, we were working on "Blind Faith"—which is in A—so it was perfect, and I used it for the whole song. That solo was hard to play! The strings on that guitar are really thick—like bass strings—and the treble strings feel loose because of the longer scale. It took a long time to get the intonation of my bends right.

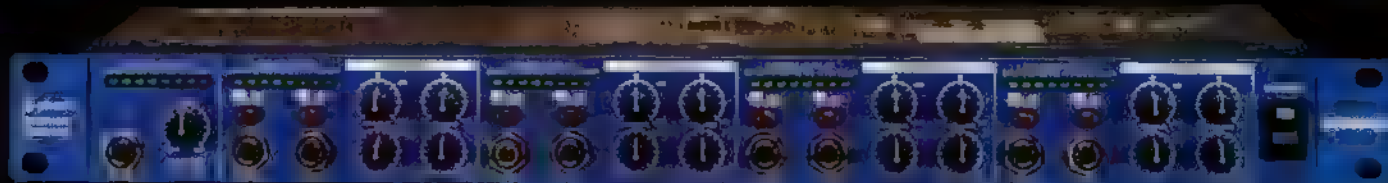
The beginning of the solo has a different sound for you.

Yeah, that bluegrass sort of thing. I was hanging out at Sterling's house and he was playing albums by all these amazing guys like Joe Maphis, Jerry Reed, Tal Farlow, Albert Lee, and Speedy West. He ended up sending me about 20 old albums of guys just *wailing*. It made me think, "Where



"When I was invited on G3, Dream Theater was already recording at noon every day," relates Petrucci, shown with Joe Satriani [left] and Steve Vai [right]. "So in order to write for the G3 tour, I had to get up at eight every morning to demo stuff. After all that work, I thought, 'Maybe I should do a solo album.'"

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PROUD TO BE PROG

have I *been?*" I also had the chance to play with Albert Lee, and to experience these guitarists doing all this chicken pickin'. I think it rubbed off a little bit. The only part of that song that I didn't play on the Silhouette Bass was the line I doubled with the keyboard at the end of the song. For that, I used my Ernie Ball signature 6-string so I'd have the range to double Jordan's part.

Could you detail your signature guitars?

They come in 6- and 7-string versions, and, to me, they're the ultimate guitars. All the things that are important to me were addressed. From the beginning, Sterling said, "We won't stop until we get it right—even if I have to make 25 prototypes." He'd love to have a successful instrument that sold a lot, but he wanted it to be my ultimate tool—and everyone at the company stuck to that promise. In fact, they had to retool for a lot of this stuff.

The feel of an instrument is really important to me, and that's why this guitar has a lot of ergonomic things. For instance, I have a very specific way that I like to hold my arm, and lots of guitars are uncomfortable because the top edge digs into my forearm and puts it at a weird angle. To get the front body contours right, we put lotion on my forearm, and then I played the guitar. Afterward you could see where my arm had been rubbing, so they knew where to sculpt it. For the neck, I wanted something a bit flatter on the back and with a flatter radius. We also experimented with the look. The paint is the same kind they use on automobiles—it changes color depending on your viewpoint. Then there's the *sound*. Steve Blucher from Di-Marzio basically beefed up my previous pickups by making the high notes sound a little thicker, and the low notes sound a little tighter. I string the guitars with Ernie Ball RPS .010s, and I use Dunlop Jazz III picks.

Doesn't the guitar also have a custom bridge?

Yes. With my old Ibanez guitars, I got used to resting the side of my palm on the Lo Pro bridge—it's very flat and doesn't feel like there's anything there. So I wanted something that had a lot of surface area, but didn't have any sharp edges. I got rid of the locking nut and fine

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PROUD TO BE PROG

tuners, though, because I think the guitar sounds a lot better this way. The tremolo still plays really smooth like a Floyd, and it can go up or down. Tuning isn't a problem because the guitars have Schaller locking tuners. This bridge also has built-in piezo pickups, so I can switch back and forth between electric and acoustic sounds.

What other gear did you use for the album?

I primarily used a Mesa/Boogie Mk IIC+ head—which has been my favorite for years because it's so tight and articulate. I also used a Dual Rectifier for a wider, grittier sound—like on "Glass Prison"—and I used a Heartbreaker for a few sections. I brought all my touring stuff into the studio, but I ended up relying on the Mk IIC+ and Dual Rectifier heads and one Boogie 4x12 cabinet with Celestion Vintage 30s. For some of the acoustic stuff I used a Tacoma JK50CE4.

How did you mic the amps?

We set up the cabinet in a big room, then we put the mics—a Shure SM57, a Sennheiser MD 421, and a Studio Projects C3—right on the grill. I don't like an ambient sound—I like it to sound as if your ear is in the speaker.

What about effects?

I didn't record with many effects, but when I was recording guide tracks for "The Great Debate," I went direct through a Line 6 Pod—set to the "Rectified" model—and an Eventide GTR4000 Ultra Harmonizer with the "Angel Echoes" preset selected. I ended up keeping those takes because they sounded really trippy. I also used an EBow on "Disappear" for a science-fiction-ish melody. For a couple of parts, I played through my T.C. Electronic 2290 or this really great AMS delay. All the other effects were added during mixdown.

Did you use any pedals?

On "Disappear," there's a track on the left side where I plugged into a CryBaby wah and a Boss delay pedal, and then straight into my amp. I manipulated the delay pedal's rate knob to detune notes and make them cascade and distort into each other. I also used the wah and the Eventide—set for a really loud repeat and

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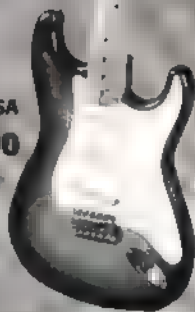
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PROUD TO BE PROG

a backward harmony—for a noise solo at the end of "Misunderstood."

That solo has a very strange feel.

I knew I wanted the backward effect, but then Mike suggested that I play the solo, flip the tape, and learn the *backward* version of the solo—which was very strange. Then I recorded myself playing the backward version, and flipped the tape over again. It ended up being the frontward solo played backward, if you get my drift. The effect is just bizarre!

What were some of the more interesting things about recording the guitars for this album?

There were several. For the noise solo at the end of "Misunderstood," I turned it up beyond ear-bleed level and just improvised. I just tried to do the most raucous, radical thing I could think of—it was pretty hysterical. Another fun thing was writing "Overture," the intro piece to "Six Degrees of Inner Turbulence." It was kind of Frank Zappa-ish—we wrote out the arrangement just using descriptives, like "beautiful melody section," "Danny Elfman part," "Bartok counterpoint feel," "majestic pompous feel," or "dark and scary." Jordan had this orchestra sound on his keyboard, and I'd shout out descriptives to which he'd improvise parts—and a lot of those became parts of the song. For "Six Degrees of Inner Turbulence," which has several movements and takes up an entire CD, I wanted to present certain themes in different settings—like a classical piece. The first movement, "Overture," presents several themes for the first time, and then a few of those are restated on the guitar before they're done as vocal sections. The cool thing about that was that I was able to play melodically for really long periods, and I love that—it's very satisfying. It's kind of like Pink Floyd—I love what David Gilmour does on "Shine on You Crazy Diamond."

What was the recording medium for the album?

We recorded basics on 2" analog tape, and some of the vocals on Ensoniq's Paris hard-disk system. We transferred everything to Pro Tools for mixing. I'm really old school, and I prefer

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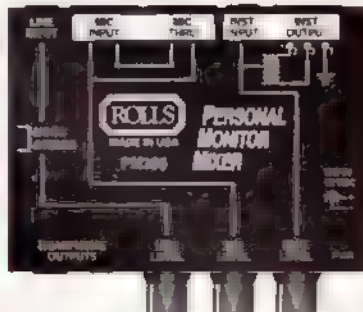


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PROUD TO BE PROG

analog sounds. But I'm doing a solo project now, and I've found that Paris sounds *amazing*—better than Pro Tools. It's very warm and fat sounding.

How did the G3 tour come about?

My manager asked me if I was interested, but I thought, "I'm not a solo artist—how could I do that tour?" Then I talked to my wife, and she said, "Are you *crazy*? Of course you're going to do it!" It was a great honor—I couldn't believe it.

How did you prepare for the tour?

I wrote all new material, except for one Liquid Tension song that had a section of a Dream Theater tune thrown in. As I was writing for the tour, I sat down and figured out what I could do to stand apart from Joe [Satriani] and Steve [Vai].



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It was just like doing a school report—if you make an outline, you'll stay focused.

How did you differentiate yourself from Satriani and Vai?

I decided to play heavier and darker, with a lot of progressive, odd-time stuff thrown in.

How much do you practice these days?

I practice a lot, but if I'm not recording or getting ready for a tour, it's hard to maintain a normal practice schedule because I get caught up in life and family stuff. When we're writing and recording, however, I play so much that it's almost *too* much. You've got to put the guitar down after a while.

Because you get sick of it?

No, because your fingers start to fall off!

What's one of the biggest things you think guitarists are missing out on these days?

Judging by a lot of the commercial rock that's out there, what's really missing is improvisation—and that's one of the things I love most about music. It used to happen a lot more, but now people make fun of it. There aren't even any solos anymore, and that's what I used to look forward to on the old Led Zepelin, Yes, Genesis, and Rush records. These days, kids practice—and they're certainly into music—but I wonder what effect today's concise songwriting style will have on their development as creative players.

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By Andy Ellis Illustration by Shawn Turner

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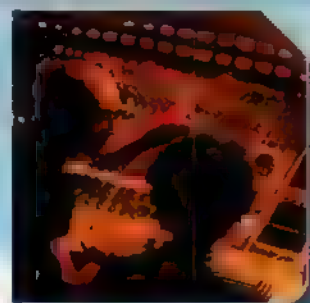
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expend *all* your energies on becoming a splendid technician, other aspects of your playing (such as tone, groove, phrasing, and soul) will suffer. Face it—the only people who want to hear you rip through arpeggios are technique-obsessed guitarists.

By contrast, many pickers acquire technique simply as a byproduct of building repertoire. Jazz and bluegrass guitarists, for example, gain fretboard mastery by wrestling with standards such as "Giant Steps" or "Whiskey Before Breakfast." This makes a lot of sense, because when you know a bunch of tunes, you can jam with more experienced soloists and learn by osmosis. But, as with any discipline, too much of a good thing can be detrimental. You could master 100 songs, yet still not be able to skip strings while flatpicking eighth-notes.

The answer may lie in a syncretic approach—why not distill chops-busting exercises from timeless music? A Bach invention could morph into a picking exercise, Duke Ellington's "Caravan" into a chordal etude, and Hendrix's solo on "Wind Cries Mary" into a double-stop workout. When your hands *and* ears grow, you get the best of both worlds.

Let's give it a whirl. In this lesson, we'll take the primary 8-bar themes from several Celtic fiddle tunes, arrange them for guitar, and use the results to polish our flatpicking chops, timing, and tone. The themes have been rigged for maximum sonic vibe—*not* playing com-

fort—so they're tricky in places. Within a line, for instance, we'll play the same note in different locations to facilitate a slur. Or we'll create harp-like cascades by alternating fretted notes and open strings. In short, we'll search for fingerings that challenge our dexterity while adding mojo to the melodies.

Maximum Payoff

Here are some tips to help you get the most out of these tunes.

- Work with a metronome or a drum machine. The themes are all in 6/8, so set the click to mark a dotted quarter-note (three eighth-notes). Each measure will have two clicks.
- The goal is to repeatedly loop each example

to refine your moves, so start slowly. Choose a base tempo that allows you to clearly pick all the notes, and then advance incrementally from there

• Celtic melodies reveal their full beauty in a harmonic context, so tape the chords or have someone play them for you.

• Don't forget dynamics and timbre. Repeat a phrase for ten or 15 minutes, and you'll discover a dozen ways to interpret it by adjusting tone and volume.

Duplicate Notes and Shifting Timbres

Ex. 1 is the main theme from "Gallager's Lament," an Irish air. This modal melody is in

The Stroke

► There are several schools of thought on pick-stroke patterns. One adheres to strict alternate picking—even when you're skipping strings or having to jump over a string to make the alternating stroke. The advantage of this pendulum-like technique is that it eliminates hesitation because your hand always knows which way to move. An upstroke follows a downstroke, and vice versa.

Another school advocates the path of least resistance—sweep picking. This technique emphasizes downward pick strokes when moving from low to high strings, and upward strokes when moving from high to low strings. With this regimen, you use alternate picking only when playing several notes on the same string. Imagine, for example, a four-note figure that starts with one note on the third string, moves to two notes on the second string, and concludes with one note on the first string. The pick-stroke pattern would be down, down, up, down. Because this economy-of-motion technique is unpredictable and requires rapid, *intuitive* decision-making, it is the hardest to master. However, those who do are rewarded with graceful lines that seem to surge from the guitar.



Ex. 1

♩ = 50-72 Dm Am G F C

5 Dm Am Dm G Dm



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Power Picking

D Dorian (D, E, F, G, A, B, C), and consists of two four-bar phrases. The 6/8 time signature (remember to count this with two clicks per measure) sets up a smooth, rolling feel.

Fiddlers and pipers favor the double grace-note slurs that pepper this tune. To slur the graces in bar 2, we have to fret B, instead of playing it as an open string as we did in bar 1. We

face a similar situation in bar 4, where we first play G as an open string and then hammer into it on the fourth string. Likewise in bar 8, we pluck open D, and then slide into it on the fifth string while adding some vibrato.

Playing the same note on different strings lets you attack it in various ways and provides timbral complexity. This technique is peculiar to stringed instruments: Keyboard instruments can't produce different versions of the same note, and wind instruments offer only a few duplicates.

Fiddle tunes often repeat portions of the melody. For example, in "Gallagher's Lament,"

bars 1 and 2 are identical to bars 5 and 6. Try giving the second iteration a bright, snappy tone by picking closer to the bridge. Musical magic lies in such subtle details.

Skiping Strings

Drawn from "The Boys of Tralee," Ex. 2's shimmering melody is sure to confound your picking hand. We're playing in the seventh position, yet half the notes are open strings. It would be much easier to play this Irish jig in the first position, but our arrangement is intended to create ringing, overlapping textures laced with a dash of dissonance. The key is to let

Ex. 2

♩ = 56-60

Ex. 3

♩ = 80-104



Power Picking

each note sound for as long as possible.

For example, when you pluck the *F#* in bar 1, it clangs delightfully with the open *G* that's still ringing as a pickup note. And that's immediately followed by two chiming major seconds, *G-A-B*. Normally we'd pick these notes as a series of scale tones, but here we create a gnarly cluster by alternating open and fretted notes. This arrangement is full of brassy minor and major seconds, and once your right hand gets over the shock of radical string skipping, you'll be rewarded with delightful sonic friction. "The Boys of Tralee" offers even more repetition than "Gallager's Lament." Try picking bars 1-3 near the bridge and bars 5-7 over the soundhole.

Autonomous Fingers

Ex. 3 stems from the improbably titled Scottish jig "The Deuks Dang O'er My Dad-die." The trick here is to keep holding certain notes after you've picked them. In bar 1, for example, let *D* and *A* (second and third strings) ring throughout the rest of the measure. (If you're having problems keeping the third string ringing when you pull-off on the fourth string, try flicking your 3rd finger toward you, rather than the floor.) Not only does this yield a sustaining fourth, it forces your 3rd finger to fret and then pull-off while your 1st and 2nd fingers remain immobile.

Great—a built-in independence drill.

By playing bar 2's *A* on the 4th string, we're able to approach it with a nice long slide starting from *F#*. For extra points, begin bar 3 with a half-barre on strings two, three, and four. This maneuver creates harmonic richness by letting you sustain *D* and *A* against the subsequent *F#-E* pull-off.

The triplicate *D*s in bars 4 and 8 sound really cool because we're alternating between the open fourth and fretted fifth strings. To keep that slide crisp and vigorous, play it with your 2nd finger—the strongest of the bunch.

Context Is Everything

Taken from the traditional Irish tune "The Storm," Ex. 4 is in *D Mixolydian* (*D, E, F#, G, A, B, C*), and makes use of more duplicate notes, double-grace slurs, and tangy sustaining seconds.

In bar 1, dig the major-second cluster (*B-A-G*) that's draped across three strings. This is familiar—we played it as an ascending arpeggio in Ex. 2. Pay attention to the position shifts in bars 1 and 2. We begin playing in the second position, shift to the fifth position, and finally

drop down to the fourth position to accommodate the *F#-G-F#* slurs. This dance recurs in bars 5 and 6.

In bars 4 and 7, plucking *F#* against the *C* chord creates a spiky Lydian sound, and in bar 8, *F#* yields a major-7th sound against *G*. You won't hear these uptown colors unless you're playing over the changes, so be sure to check out the melody in its harmonic context.

This tune is typically played on uilleann pipes—at brisker tempos than we could ever manage on guitar—with a keening tone, quick vibrato, and lightning-fast slurs. To emulate the pipes' penetrating sound, pluck close to the bridge and make your vibrato snappy in bars 1, 3, and 5.

Digging Celtic Treasure

If you want to arrange your own Celtic flatpicking studies, two books will provide years of musical discovery. Mel Bay's *Celtic Encyclopedia, Mandolin Edition*, by Robert Bancalari, contains more than 100 Irish and Scottish airs, marches, jigs, reels, and dances, along with five tunes by the great harpist Turlough O'Carolan.

Also from Mel Bay is *A Dossan of Heather* by Jean Duval and Stephen Jones. This spectacular collection documents the music of Packie Manus Byrne—a great Irish musician and storyteller. The book's 85 tunes are annotated with Byrne's recollections and tall tales, and enhanced by photos, illustrations, and maps. A companion CD features Byrne playing many of these tunes on tinwhistle, flute, and fiddle, with harp, piano, and guitar accompaniment. If you're new to Irish music, start here.

Ex. 4

♩ = 66-92



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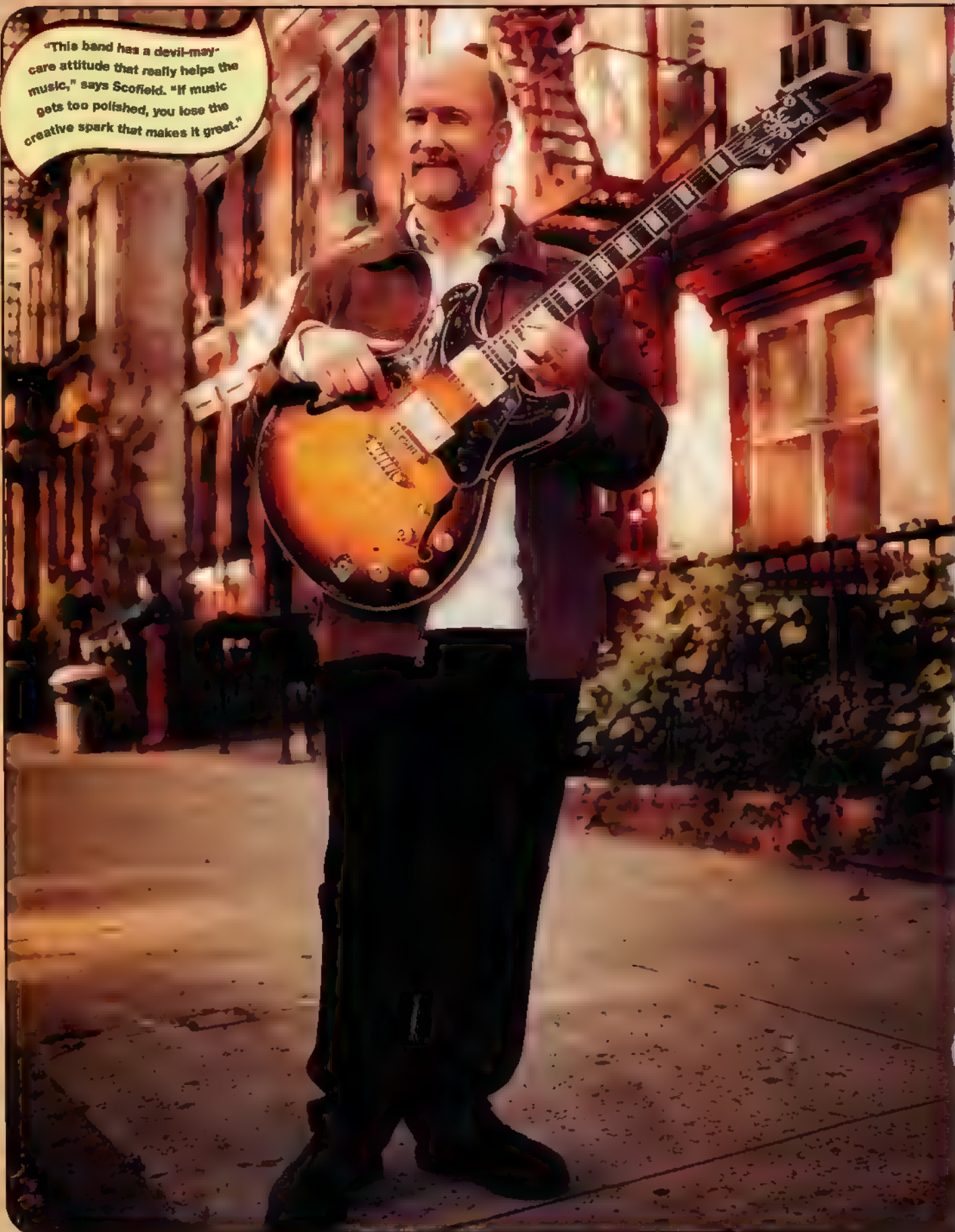
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"This band has a devil-may-care attitude that really helps the music," says Scofield. "If music gets too polished, you lose the creative spark that makes it great."



Fat-Fingered Funk

JOHN SCOFIELD'S SLAMMIN' NEW BRAND OF JAM BAND

Ungle beats and ambient loops? Adrenaline-fueled trance grooves? Inverted guitar samples? This is the territory of DJs and hip-hop wizards, not jazz-rock guitar icons. ■ "These days, sampling is for everybody. Even an old fuddy-duddy jazz guy like me can do it," jokes John Scofield, whose new überjam [Verve] marks a triumphant metamorphosis for the New York guitarist. A stylistic coup d'état, the album unites rock, jazz, funk, and electronica with a jam-band's spirit of improvisation. "Sampling brings a whole new element and energy to my music that makes it alive again." > > >

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Fat-Fingered Funk

However, the most striking addition to the Scofield sound is rhythm-guitarist extraordinaire Avi Bortnick. "I had a million reasons why I never wanted a two-guitar band," says Scofield. "Then I tried Avi. I think of us as one really good guitar player. His strengths are my weaknesses, and vice versa. Also, he doesn't mind me taking endless solos all night."

How did you discover Avi Bortnick?

Charlie Hunter recommended him. He said, "I know the greatest rhythm guitarist in the world. He lives in San Francisco, and he may be looking for a band." At first, I thought that sounded a bit over the top. But then I played with Avi, and I couldn't deny it. He has this *snap* to his comping that gives the band a rhythmic lift.

How were überjam's tunes composed?

With this more groove-oriented jam-band music, the material has to *evolve* rather than be composed. These tunes grew from rehearsals, soundchecks, gig tapes, and jams where I would start something and then everybody else would make up their parts. That's how this music has to be—rather than one person conceiving the whole thing and telling the band what to play.

What draws you to funk?

I've always loved anything that gets into a transcendental kind of swinging thing, whether it's John Coltrane or Jimmy Smith. I think funk offers that same hypnotic, ecstatic element.

How do you sample your parts?

Usually, what I do is put my amp on standby, play some stuff into my Boomerang Phrase Sampler, and then turn my amp back on. That way, when the sample finally comes out, it's the first time you've heard it—and maybe it's sped up, reversed, or looped.

Another thing I do—like on the solo in "überjam"—is record a phrase into the Boomerang and immediately play it backwards so it comes out in time with the groove. It reminds me of the way John Coltrane used false fingerings on his saxophone. I also have a Boss Loop Station—which is cool because you can store

In the Pocket with Avi Bortnick

WHEN HE'S NOT ON TOUR

with Scofield, Avi Bortnick is an acoustical engineer who shapes the sound of concert halls and other public buildings. Two hundred or more nights a year, however, you'll find Bortnick powering grooves with a strumming attack accurate enough to make a Swiss watchmaker swoon.

What was your audition with Scofield like?

I was pretty nervous when I first met him. He had just plugged in, and there was that sound—the sound I had heard on so many records. It was an amazing feeling to be in the same room with it.

How did you develop your funky sixteenth-note comping?

I listened to guys like Chic's Nile Rodgers and Earth, Wind, and Fire's Al McKay. I also got stronger by playing with drummers who had shaky time, because I had to keep things from slowing down or sounding weak. Playing in Afro-funk bands helped, too, because the music is remarkably similar to American soul and funk. I also got tighter playing Caribbean music, because it has really fast tempos.

You have a really sharp attack.

Sometimes I have to be careful, though, because I strum too hard. My Fender Strat has graphite Graph Tech String Saver saddles which are smoother than metal. Without them, I'd probably break strings every song.

What's on your pedalboard?

I have two delays, a Z. Vex Seek Wah, a Boss phase shifter, a DOD FX-17 wah/volume pedal, an Ibanez Auto Filter, and a Boss Blues Driver—which I like because it has a wider range of overdrive than an Ibanez Tube Screamer.

What about amplifiers?

I regularly use solid-state amps—such as Fender Stage 112SEs—because they stay clean at louder volumes. Also, when you're playing snappy rhythm, the quick, brittle response of a solid-state amp can work in your favor.

You also fly in different sounds onstage—at times, it's almost like you're a DJ. How do you generate all those wild sampled textures and loops?

I use a Boss Dr. Sample and a Korg ES-1 sampling drum machine. I have a Yamaha MFC10 foot controller that lets me trigger patterns, single samples, and drones with my feet.

—JG



"When we discover an exciting new groove, there's this feeling of elevation, and the music seems effortless," says Bortnick.

Fat-Fingered Funk

samples in it. But it doesn't slow things down or speed them up, so I think I'm going to start using both units onstage.

Are there any inherent dangers using

samplers onstage?

When you start a sample, it might not link up with the song rhythmically, and there's always a risk of electronic glitches. Luckily, our music is loose enough that we can have funny train wrecks and it's okay.

When did you begin playing your Ibanez AS200?

Back in 1980, when my old Gibson ES-335 needed some work. They gave me the AS200 because it sounded similar, and I just kept on playing it. I've recently gone back to the Gibson, and it sounds beautiful in a really special way, but when I'm on the gig, I get superstitious and need my old Ibanez to do my thing. I'm just a one-

guitar kind of guy, I guess.

What is your pedalboard like these days?

Velcroed to a little piece of wood, I have a Pro Co Rat distortion, a Boss equalizer that I use for super treble, an A/B box that allows me to switch over to my tuner, and an old Ibanez stereo chorus pedal I've had for a million years. I used to be a chorus addict, but I've been off the stuff for years now, thank God [laughs]. I use batteries in my pedals because I've found them to be quieter than power supplies.

In addition to the Boomerang, I use a DigiTech XP-100 Whammy-Wah. I love it because it has filter and whammy effects. At the end of "I Brake for Monster Booty," I scratch the string and make it go real high with the Whammy. That was inspired by Tom Morello of Rage Against the Machine. He's the master at it, but I think he does it with wrenches and chainsaws.

No delay pedal?

No, but on the album there are some wacko delays that were put on later by engineer Joe Ferla. He did some really cool stuff, such as following me phrase by phrase and leaving some phrases dry and others drenched in reverb.

What do your ears look for in an overdrive?

I just want something that makes the guitar sound fat, yet still gives me a lot of distinction. When distortion gets too saturated, you can't hear the notes. I haven't been using the Rat nearly as much as I used to. Instead, I'm overdriving the amp.

What amp are you using live?

I usually rent amps on the road, and lately I've been cranking the clean channel of a Mesa/Boogie Mark IV while bringing down the master to get the crunch from the amp instead of the Rat. I can control things by riding the volume and tone controls on my guitar. Rental amps are dicey, though, because each one is different. I'm excited that we're taking a tour bus out this year so I can bring my own amp—a Matchless DC-30.

Is that the amp you used on Überjam?

Yes. When Matchless first came out I thought, "This really is the greatest amp." Then I bought one in the mid-'90s, and it didn't seem to sound quite as good. But when I tried an older one—like a '92—at a rehearsal studio in New York, I loved it so much I bought my own. I found this one at Willie's American Guitars in St. Paul, Minnesota.

What is one of the most valuable lessons you've learned so far?

Of all the great musicians I've worked with, Miles Davis made the biggest impression on me. He really taught me something about the jazz code of ethics—which is, "What's the real deal?" The most important thing is getting to that spontaneous magic on your ax. You can't fake it, and I just want to get to that place more often. That's what Miles was trying to do—to have everybody get to that pure spot.

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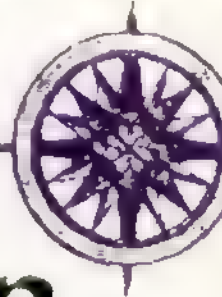






Buried Treasures

50 Unsung Albums That Every Guitarist Should Own



BY THE GUITAR PLAYER STAFF

When gutter laureate Charles Bukowski spat out that “nobody knows anything,” he certainly wasn’t taking guitarists into account. Any one of us can pontificate endlessly on glorious and heinous tones, regurgitate seminal riffs note for note, and detail the most exotic of signal paths. And on the subject of classic guitar albums, everyone pretty much knows everything. Sorry, Charlie

■ And yet, the legacy of recorded guitar does not rest solely upon the discographies of Hendrix, Clapton, Beck, Page, and other 6-string deities. Nor does it always embrace > > >

ILLUSTRATION BY MITCH O'CONNELL

Buried Treasures


established classics, technical masterpieces, and mammoth hits. Deep in the grooves and digital datastreams of underappreciated and forgotten releases are moments of brilliance that deserve another chance to inspire legions of guitarists. These records were produced by heroes and wackos alike, and they resonate with just as much passion as many of the annotated albums that make up the typical guitarist's list of desert-island discs.

Of course, there are thousands of closet classics out there, and short of a 50-lb coffee-table book, there's scant chance of cataloging them all. But just for fun, the GP staff vot-

ed on a list of 50 under-the-radar albums graced with performances every guitarist should assimilate into their trick bags. So check a few of these babies out, and ensure that Mr. Bukowski could never call you out on your comprehensive knowledge of bitchin' guitar recordings.



CHET ATKINS
Hometown Guitar, 1968


 A great guitar album should inspire you musically, but it's hard to play when

your jaw is on the floor. Despite the humble cover shot, this obscure record contains cocky, mind-boggling licks that will leave you asking, "How did Chet Atkins make it sound so easy?"

In the modal theme to "Get on with It," for example, Mr. Guitar peels off spectacular nylon-string cascades with such casual precision it's almost comical—he might as well be shuffling a deck of cards. Another flabbergaster is the down-home "Blue Angel." It sounds like Paganini playing a two-step, as Atkins splices together an action-packed melody using fretted notes and open strings. Soon you realize you're hearing a player who transcended mere chops. What Atkins brought to the guitar is closer to the dedication and grace you see in Olympic gold medalists. But don't worry, these licks aren't impossible. They're just something to shoot for—like the moon



BE BOP DELUXE
The Very Best of Be Bop Deluxe, 1998

 Bill Nelson used Be Bop Deluxe as a vehicle to explore musical muses as varied as prog, glam, and new wave. Culled from the group's six albums, *The Very Best* proves Nelson to be one of rock's most underrated guitarists.

"Maid in Heaven" is two-and-a-half minutes of pure power-pop bliss. "Jet Silver and the Dolls of Venus" features an outro solo that sounds like a cross between Mick Ronson and Jimi Hendrix, and "Life in the Air Age" shows Nelson's adeptness at layering a ton of guitar tones. *The Very Best* offers a concise overview of a player who has always refused to be categorized.




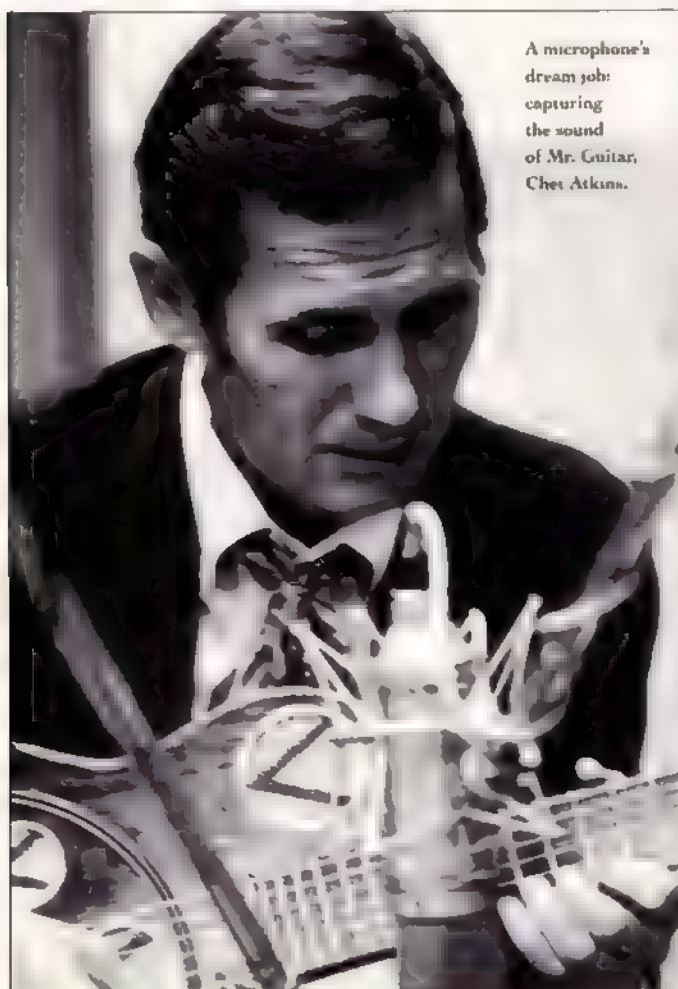
GEORGE BENSON
Bad Benson, 1974

 From the era of bell bottoms and *Shaft* comes this gem of a guitar record. It opens with a feisty, epic version of "Take Five," where Benson tears up the fretboard like he has something to prove, pushing and prodding at the odd meter until your ears forget the tune is in 5/4. His hollowbody tone is delicious—clean, but with a sparkly breakup on fat chords. Complete with wah pedals, street-smart funk grooves, and Don Sebesky's orchestral arrangement, "Full Compass" is pure cops and robbers. Above the cacophony of it all, Benson wails, blurring the line between playing and singing. He doesn't do his famous vocal scatting on this record, but Benson's voice comes through loud and clear in the notes he chooses, and his lyrical leads always tell a story.



DAVID BOWIE
David Live, 1974

 Not glam enough for the orange-hair and eye-shadow crowd, or cool enough for the plastic-soul darlings that would make "Fame" an enormous hit, *David Live* fell into a conceptual phantom zone. But who cares about concept when you have Earl Slick burning over



A microphone's dream job: capturing the sound of Mr. Guitar, Chet Atkins.

Bowie's back catalog with soaring melodic lines and bratty jolts of distortion? Throughout the 2-CD set, Slick almost steals the show from the frontman with a liquid-steel tone and a string-breaking aggression that puts the spotlight firmly on the solos. *David Live* is an essential lesson on how to bend someone else's songs to your will—and isn't that every lead guitarist's dream?



EDDIE BOYD 1956 *South Rhodes*, 1968

Planist Eddie Boyd may be one of the lesser-appreciated icons of American blues, but sparks certainly flew during this landmark, six-hour session that paired Boyd with the members of Fleetwood Mac (minus Jeremy Spencer). The real hit here, of course, is guitarist Peter Green, who smolders with soul-

ful intensity on the dozen Boyd-penned songs. Green's spirited riffing and lyrical solos—which often feature his celebrated out-of-phase Les Paul tone—elevate the music in spite of Boyd's notoriously somber lyrics and rather plodding piano style. The result is an album that can be appreciated by guitar nuts and blues historians alike



JULIAN BREM & JOHN WILLIAMS *Together*, 1972

Ever wished for a master guitar recital in your living room? Pop in this stellar disc, close your eyes, and Julian Bream and John Williams will magically appear. The recording is so clear, you can all but hear the maestros breathe. Drawing from timeless lute, piano, ensemble, and guitar literature, the

duo proves that two nylon-string guitars can sound like an orchestra. Manuel de Falla's fiery "La Vida Breve" is a case in point—who knew you could be assaulted by classical guitars? Another delight is Fernando Sor's diatonic epic, "L'Encouragement," which climaxes with a sprightly melody that even dyed-in-the-wool flatpickers will flip over.



BILL BRUFORD *Master Strokes* 1978–1985, 1986

By the time he appeared on former Yes drummer Bill Bruford's first solo album (1978's *Feels Good to Me*), Allan Holdsworth was already gaining a reputation as the guitarist of choice in fusion circles. *Master Strokes*—a compilation of Bruford's first four solo records—finds Holdsworth being, well,

Holdsworth. The man changed the way many perceive the instrument, and his legato approach makes a mockery of the terms "hammer-on" and "pull-off." The guy sounds like he picks once a month!

Although Holdsworth's own solo records are classic, it's always a treat to hear him acting as a hired gun. Here, the rhythm section of Bruford and bassist Jeff Berlin doesn't try to match him phrase for phrase. Instead, Bruford seems content to give Holdsworth an unadorned canvas to paint his never-ending lines. The result is often astounding.



JAMES BURTON & RALPH MOONEY *Corn Pickin' and Slick Slidin'*, 1969

"Burton and Mooney. You know the names, but not the team. It's new!" exclaim the liner notes to this often-overlooked prize. By the time *Corn Pickin' and Slick Slidin'* was released, James Burton and pedal-steel wizard Ralph Mooney had already graced hundreds of records between them.

Corn Pickin' and Slick Slidin' finds the duo playing instrumental versions of country classics such as "Your Cheatin' Heart" and "I'm a Lonesome Fugitive," as well as a few original compositions. Although Burton's trademark chicken-pickin' licks make an appearance (the track "Moonshine" may contain his cluckiest phrasing ever), it's his lyrical Dobro work that takes center stage. *Corn Pickin' and Slick Slidin'* is about tasty interpretations of classic tunes by two legendary players.



Buried Treasures



LARRY CARLTON

Last Nite, 1987

 You'll often find L.A. hot-shots trading licks at the cozy Baked Potato in North Hollywood. Sadly, the only evidence of most of these magical jams are the next morning's hang-overs and ringing ears. Well, here's one that *didn't* get away. From the very first lick, you can tell Larry Carlton is having one of those inspired nights where everything goes right.

The real treat is "The B.P. Blues," a slow-burning 12-bar jam that climaxes with dazzling fretboard fireworks. "At least

once a night, I play a straight-ahead, down-home blues," says Carlton in the liner notes. "It's good for the soul." It's also good for *your* soul, as you lose yourself in that impossibly creamy guitar tone. Even Carlton's softest notes seem to sustain forever. And, amazingly, the louder and busier he gets, the better he sounds.



STANLEY CLARKE

Stanley Clarke, 1974


 After a brief stint in Chick Corea's Return to Forever, guitarist Bill Connors hooked up with RTF bassist Stanley Clarke for Clarke's second solo record. After using esteemed jazzier Pat Martino on his first album, it seems as if Clarke was looking for more "rock" in the old jazz+rock=fusion equation. That's where Connors came in.

Playing in an all-star lineup with Clarke, Tony Williams, and Jan Hammer, Connors had no choice but to tear it up. Equipped with a Les Paul Custom, a Marshall half-stack, and a Maestro Phase Shifter, Connors' playing mixes Coltrane-esque harmonic concepts with the singing electric tones of *Fresh Cream*-era Clapton. Connors also brought a lovely, violin-esque feel to his phrases—a cool counterpoint to his shred-ability. This is one of the high points of '70s fusion guitar



BILLY COBHAM

Spectrum, 1973

 *Spectrum* was light years ahead of its time, foreshadowing much of the rock, fusion, and heavy metal that would follow. With Billy Cobham's huge percussion chops,

Jan Hammer's mind-boggling piano and synth work, and Tommy Bolin's finest guitar playing of his short career, *Spectrum* had a major impact on Jeff Beck, Pat Thrall, and many others.

Bolin plays head-spinning Echoplex manipulations and killer unison lines with Hammer on "Quadrant 4," and spews funky shred fills on "Taurian Matador." Throughout the album, Bolin displays a mature sense of dynamics, a clever use of effects, and he plays parts that simply kill. Even a cursory listen to this album will reveal riffs that sound suspiciously like Beck's *Wired*, Van Halen's *1984*, and Al Di Meola's mid-career work. *Spectrum* pre-dated all of those records. And yes, the album is awash in self-indulgence, but that's part of the fun.

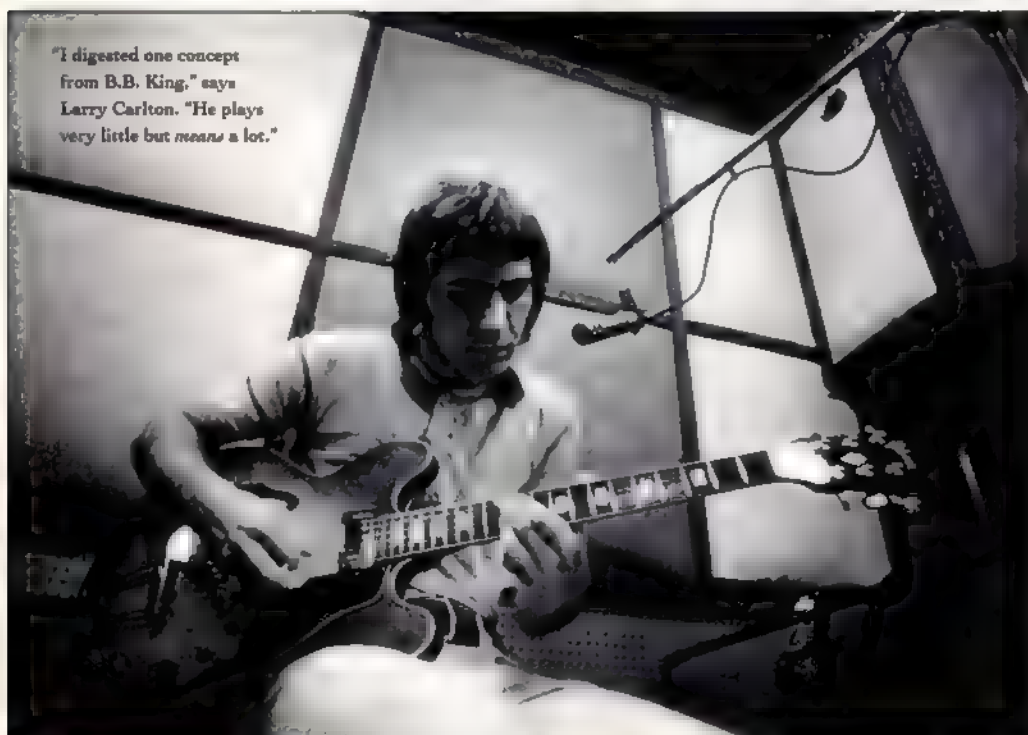


THE CREATION

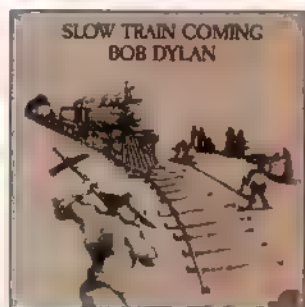
The Complete Collection, Volumes I and II (1966-68), 2001

 Other players got the glory for their feedback excursions, but Creation guitarist Eddie Phillips is the lost master of noise-splattered squeals, squalls, and psychotic freak-outs. He was so over-the-top that Pete Townshend once asked him to join the Who as second guitarist. One can only imagine the feral cacophony those two could have launched!

The Creation got a wink from filmmaker Wes Anderson in 1998, when he used a snippet of the band's "Making Time" as the soundtrack to the main character's thought process in *Rushmore*. It was 15 seconds of riff majesty that moviegoers were humming on the way out of the theater. *The Complete*



Collection shows you what Phillips could do with a full two-minute pop song.



BOB DYLAN

Slow Train Coming, 1979

When Dylan took a turn toward Christianity in the late '70s, he did so in grand fashion. Recorded at Alabama's famed Muscle Shoals Sound Studio, *Slow Train Coming* is a soulful R&B album that features the hit "Gotta Serve Somebody." And not only did Dylan hire the Muscle Shoals Horns, he recruited Mark Knopfler to play lead guitar. Knopfler's inspired 6-string touch is immediately apparent on "Precious Angel," which he kicks off with a cool intro and then embellishes throughout with liquid bends

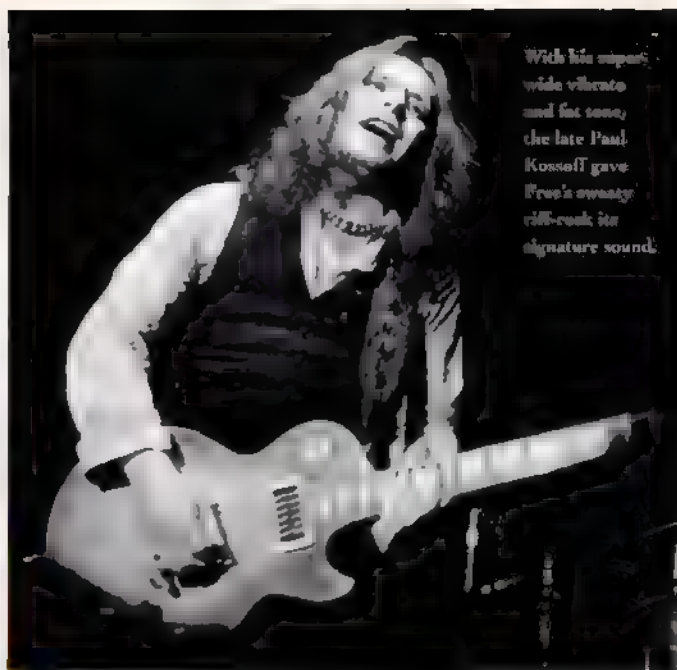
and supple, bell-like lines. On "Slow Train" and "Gonna Change My Way of Thinking," Knopfler cops a bluesier attitude, digging in with fierce, Albert King-style wails and ballsy, grinding rhythms. Knopfler's tone and vibe was so right for this album—Dylan couldn't have chosen a better driving partner on his road to salvation.



THE FABULOUS THUNDERBIRDS

Girls Go Wild, 1979

With the chugging shuffle of the lead track, "Wait On Time," it was clear that the Fabulous Thunderbirds were not your normal bar-band fodder. Their groove was deeper, they had a swagger beyond their years, and guitarist Jimmie

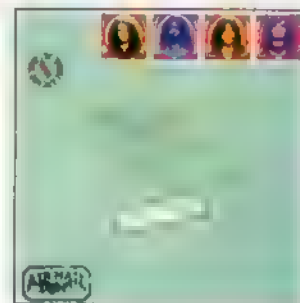


With his super-wide vibrato and fat tone, the late Paul Kossoff gave Free's swampy riff-rock its signature sound.

Vaughan had an uncanny grasp of post-war electric blues guitar.

Girls Go Wild (formerly titled *The Fabulous Thunderbirds*) showcases all of the Vaughan trademarks: impeccable rhythm work, an unrivaled sense of dynamics, and righteously cool tones. In fact, Vaughan's propensity to flirt with lo-fi tones on *Girls Go Wild* keeps the album

sounding startlingly fresh more than 20 years after its release—not any easy feat for any album, much less a blues record.



FREE

Free Live, 1971

The late Paul Kossoff was arguably the most underrated guitarist of the late-'60s British blues boom. More aggressive than Clapton and Green, yet more lyrical than rockers such as Mick Ralphs, Kossoff was a musical bridge between traditional electric blues and riff rock.

Although their studio records were heavy on attitude, *Free Live* unleashes a tremendous dose of strut and swagger. Kossoff's guitar is absolutely huge throughout, and you'll quickly realize how big an influence he was on players such as Angus Young and Gary Moore. Double-stop cries, su-



Hair-raising blues—Jimmie Vaughan gets down with a Strat and a perm.



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per-wide vibrato, and absolutely *killing* tone were just a few of Kossoff's strong points. *Free Live* also proves that Free was one of the heaviest, groovingest, and most ass-kicking rock bands ever.

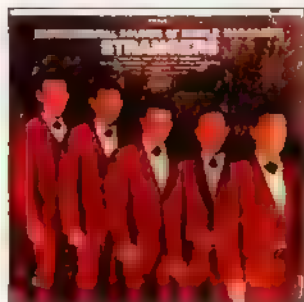


ROBBEN FORD

The Inside Story, 1979

Robben Ford was a veteran sideman with Tom Scott & the L.A. Express, Jimmy Witherspoon, Joni Mitchell, and George Harrison when he cemented his status as a solo artist with this fusion-oriented album. But unlike the syrupy L.A.-jazz releases of the era, Ford's music simmers with earthy soul. Even when stretching his newfound jazz muscles on such soaring cuts as "For the One I Love," "There's No One Else," and "Far Away," Ford's gutsiness remains intact. It's hard to say how much of the album was shaped by the production hand of Steve Cropper, but the R&B guitar legend deserves credit for presenting Ford as a cutting-edge jazz artist with wailing blues chops. On "North Carolina," for example, Ford wraps up his solo in a riveting duet with harp player (and brother) Mark Ford. Another high point is "Tee Time for Eric," a funky, up-tempo number with tricky changes that Ford tackles with astonishing skill. *The Inside Story* is definitely a high-water mark of Ford's affair with fusion, and it's

one jazz-rock record that will never sound dated.

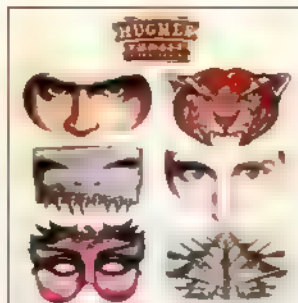


MERLE HAGGARD

The Instrumental Sounds of Merle Haggard's Strangers, 1969

Merle Haggard was the hottest thing in country in 1969, and this all-instrumental album gave his band a much-deserved opportunity to strut their stuff. And, man, was there a lot to strut. The coolest cuts feature guitarist Roy Nichols and steel-player Norm Hamlet, who demonstrate the fine art of duet playing on "Leavin' Phoenix," "Poppin' Corn," "Hammin' It Up," "Whooper

Snooper," and "A Hop and a Skip." Both players were at the top of their game at this point (thanks, in part, to Haggard's letting them stretch out so much onstage), and you're treated to mega doses of Nichols' signature string bending and chicken pickin'. Nobody makes albums like this anymore, and we're just damn lucky that someone at Capitol Records was willing to let Hag's road band have their way in the studio.



HUGHES/THRALL

Hughes/Thrall, 1982

"Glen Hughes and myself—along with producer Andy Johns—worked very hard

to make a record with musical substance that would also be commercially viable," says guitarist Pat Thrall. "We achieved the former, but failed miserably in the latter. You win some, you lose some."

That's how Thrall summed up Hughes/Thrall's lone release, which is full of strong tunes, cool arrangements, impeccable playing, and absolutely awesome guitar tones. Thrall relied primarily on a pair of solid-state Randall amps and an EMG-loaded, maple-on-mahogany Mighty Mite Strat copy to produce the record's crushing dirty tones, and he used a 100-watt Marshall and a Roland JC-120 for the crystalline clean sounds. Thrall also used a Lexicon Prime Time and a Roland Chorus/Echo to dish out state-of-the-art delay textures that were beyond all but the Edge-iest new wavers.



JELLYFISH

Spilt Milk, 1993

This under-appreciated effort from pop-rock historians Jellyfish contains some of the best tunes that the Beatles, Badfinger, and the Beach Boys never wrote. And each one is full to bursting with great guitar—courtesy of Lyle Workman and Jon Brion. Relying on a huge collection of vintage gear ("We had Gibsons, Fenders, Rics, Gretsches, Voxes, Marshalls, Hiwatts, Magnatones, and more," recalls Workman), Brion strolls down classic rock's memory lane with righteous Queen-isms in "Joining a Fan Club," and Fab Four-to-the-bar AC30 spans in "Sebrina, Paste and Plato." Workman works similar magic in



Smashing kixons, broken wishes: pop masterminds Jellyfish.

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sleeve than metalloïd riffs, chromatic soloing, and a little funk. The title track pits Bad Brains-style hardcore against a funky backbeat, and boasts a solo that starts off in harmonic minor, manically progresses to whole-tone/chromatic/diminished territory, and ends up with a swaggering blues feel. For "Love Hears Its Ugly Head," Reid straps on a PAF-loaded Gibson ES-345 to dish out restrained R&B rhythms, and "Under Cover of Darkness" features Gibson Byrland-and-driven faux-organ tones and swinging rhythms. Besides brilliantly mixing flavors from all over the globe into the band's unique style, *Times Up* shows just how awesome effects can sound when a genius gets a hold of them. Using an Eventide H3000 and a Digitech DSP-256, Reid gives *Times Up* bizarre, one-of-a-kind sounds that are seamlessly integrated into each song.

more up guitarist Vernon Reid's *Up*, showed that there was way barriers, its successor, *Times* smashed musical and societal innum debut, *Wild*.

LIVING COLOUR



right scary! Vaughan is, of course, amazing. Supersaturn are typically pretty demanding affairs, but this one works because both players were blessed with a very special attribute—soul.



Taped at a Canadian television studio in 1983, this never-to-be-repeated pairing of two blues giants provides a unique opportunity to witness humor and head cutting. Vaughan defers to the elder bluesman by playing in an uncharacteristically restrained manner, while King does an equally unusual thing—he will-ingly plays *rhythm* behind another lead guitarist. The back-and-forth banter is great—especially King's fatherly assurances to Vaughan that he'll "get better"—and when it's time to play, both men turn on like they're performing at a great live gig. Despite struggling with tuning problems, King sounds bold and brazen, and when he kicks on his phase shifter, it's down-

ALBERT KING WITH STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN



swimming. The track's energy is absolutely disappointing, however, as ever-so-slight mistakes make an obsessed guitarist make an you get to hear the perfection—the "Alone with You" solo is that One of the coolest things about have become his hallmarks. impeccable speed picking that es the classic "violet" tone and smoking solo that showcases he has ever put to tape—as well happens the greatest overdrive that... with You" features per- and lush chord work, and some unmistakable clean tones. "Missing Her" features John-son's subsequent releases. "Ramones" is a non-stop and as a result, the records have an immediate and endless takes and

When Eric Johnson's *Seven Worlds* (1998) came out in 1998, it signaled to the world what music nuts in Austin, Texas, had known for years: A true guitar genius was on the loose. Most people still didn't know, however, was that Johnson had recorded a solo album between 1976 and 1977 that would not see the light of day until 1998. That record, *Seven Worlds*, makes it clear that Johnson had nailed his trip and his sound (and before *Tones*, in fact the takes of "Zap" and "Emerald Eyes" that appear on *Worlds* rival the versions on *Tones*). It's clear Johnson didn't have the



sical standpoint." The album succeeds from a musical sales were disappointing, the sales were disappointing. *Spilt Milk* to be an important says Workman. "They wanted make just another pop record." Andy Stuart didn't set out to found [Roger Lanning and "I know that [Jellyfish into a vintage Gibson combo. played on an ES-335 plugged "New Mistake," which was Harrison's slide solo in finest moment might be the "Guitar" "Empathy." His and tasteful electric parts in lays down glorious acoustic De in "All Is Forgiven," and "out-of-control feedback." "The Ghost at Number One."

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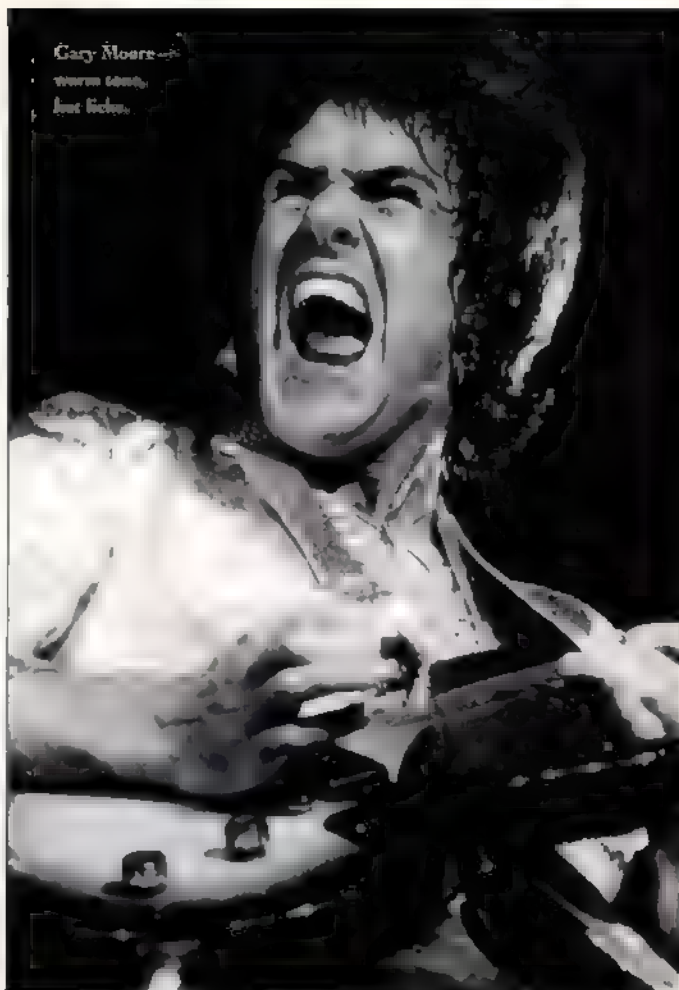
MONTROSE

Montrose, 1973

 This solo debut from Ronnie Montrose would profoundly influence players and


set a new standard for riff rock. Huge tones, infectious chord progressions, and fiery, lyrical solos drew guitarists in immediately, but all that doesn't tell the whole story. Add stellar vocals by a then-unknown Sam Hagar and spot-on production by Montrose and the killer team of Ted Templeman and Donn Landee (who would work similar magic on many Van Halen albums a few years later), and you've got an instant classic.

There are no bad tunes on *Montrose*, but high points for meaty riffing include "Make It Last," "Rock the Nation," and "Bad Motor Scooter." For solos, Montrose's breaks in "I Don't Want It" and "Good Rockin' Tonight" are standouts—the tones, bends, and vibrato sound vital and fresh to this day.



GARY MOORE

Corridors of Power, 1982


 Deep-fry the blues and heavy metal in a vat of boiling testosterone, and you get Gary Moore's sound on this album—a take-no-prisoners tone that leaves home-stereo speakers bleeding. The white-hot power chords that open "Cold Hearted," for example, are proof that a stock Strat, a Marshall, and a Boss distortion pedal can shake the earth like an angry volcano. Speaking of volcanos, fans of Van Halen's

"Eruption" will surely dig the cadenza that opens "The End of the World." Moore *means* every sixty-fourth note he plays, and even when he's shooting off fret-melting rock licks, his blues come through loud and clear.



STEVE MORSE

The Introduction, 1984

 Let Steve Morse take you to the crossroads. No, not the spot mythicized by Robert Johnson, but the bustling intersection where rock, country,

Buried Treasures

jazz, and classical all cross paths. *The Introduction's* ambitious instrumentals are powered by grassy hooks, rockin' tones, and the insane chops that put Morse in the *GP* Readers Poll Gallery of the Greats. To hear some of the most delicious wah-wah leads ever, check out "Huron River Blues." Or, if you're in the market for a true impress-your-friends lick, try tackling the knuckle-busting Intro to "On the Pipe." The album's added bonus is a guest appearance by the formidable Albert Lee, who twangs it out with Morse on "General Lee." Pound for pound, you'll be hard pressed to find a better desert-island guitar disc than this one



NEU!

Neu! '75, 1975


 Kraftwerk's unlikely influence on early hip-hop music has been well documented, but two fugitives from the German synth unit also had a profound impact on punk and electronica. After multi-instrumentalists Michael Rother and Klaus Dinger left Kraftwerk to form Neu! in 1971, they established a sonic aesthetic of minimalism and butt-simple grooves. While *Neu! '75* has proven to be unlistenable for some, cagey guitarists will marvel over Rother's angry, angst-ridden riffs and his beautiful textural washes. Listen closely and you'll hear the seeds of

punk rock and ambient dance music. If you want to steal some obscure, post-modern licks, this is your secret weapon.



BUCK OWENS

Buck Owens and his Buckaroos, Live in Japan, 1967

 The Buckaroos are at their late-'60s best as they give

the land of the rising sun a little taste of Bakersfield dance-hall action. Guitarist Don Rich snaps, crackles, and pops on "Open up Your Heart" and "Where Does the Good Times Go," and he plays superb fiddle on the zydeco-flavored "Fishin' on the Mississippi" and "Fiddle Polka." The Buckaroos' two-part vocal intros and soaring harmonies are spine tingling, and Tom Brumley's pedal-steel playing is absolutely killer. The Japanese audience must have been fascinated by Owens' school teacher-like way of introducing songs—not to mention when he yells, "Take the gloves off, Don," as Rich clams a lead break. It's all in good fun, though, and the band's inspired

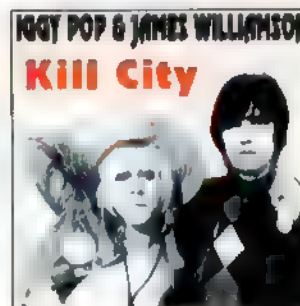
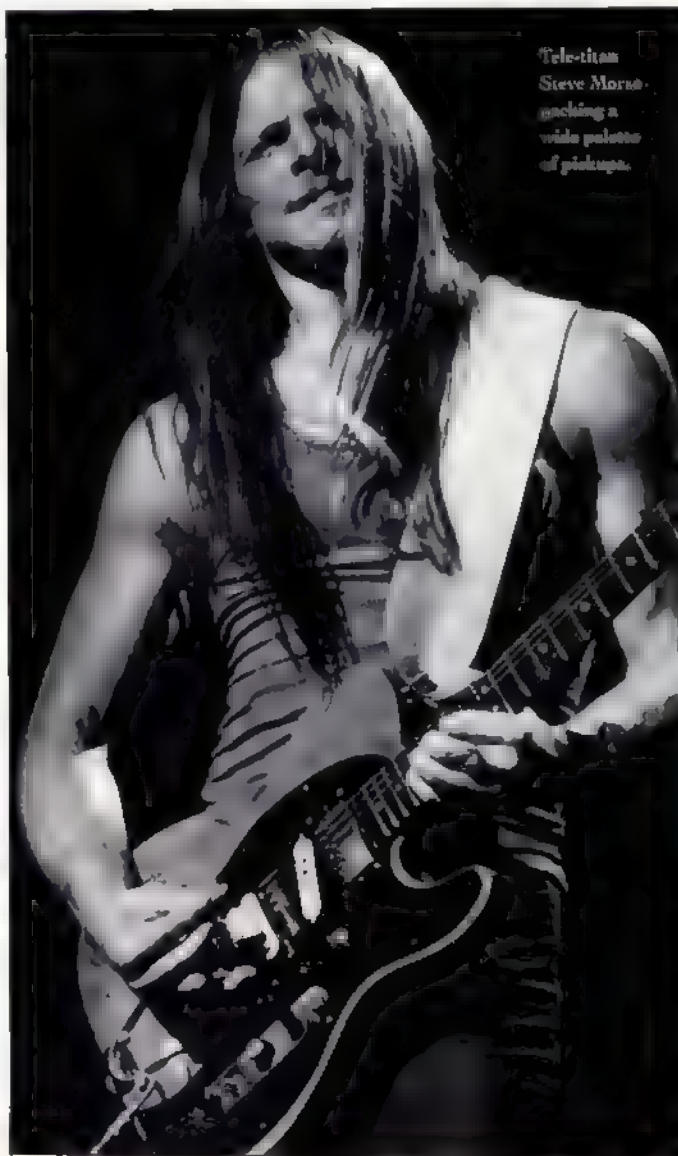
performance testifies to their delight at being the first major American country act to perform in Japan.



PINK FLOYD


The Division Bell, 1994

 It may never be considered a classic Floyd record, but David Gilmour's extended guitar solos on *The Division Bell* will still elicit gasps from fans of his singing, echo-washed Strat tones. Highlights include the instrumental "Marooned" (which boasts one of the most beautiful and seamless implementations ever of Digitech's venerable Whammy pedal), the eerie, backward E-Bow lines, delay-drenched syncopations, and ethereal harmonized solo on "Take It Back;" and the gorgeous, sparkling-clean Strat licks on "Coming Back to Life."



IGGY POP & JAMES WILLIAMSON

Kill City, 1977

 The crazed, sloppy brilliance of *Kill City* is a testament to why rock and rollers should never underestimate the power of the demo. Ex-Stooges Iggy Pop and James Williamson started collaborating on song demos after Pop's sojourn in a mental hospital. Although their

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efforts failed to snare a major recording contract, the duo's home recordings are tangible proof that attitude *can* be captured on tape. Williamson's snotty tone and languid riffs are simultaneously sensual and dangerous, and Pop's singing alternates between tortured and disinterested. This is what the Strokes *wish* they sounded like.

compact disc

PUBLIC IMAGE LTD. *Compact Disc*, 1985

Even a lot of Steve Vai's die-hard fans don't know that he played on this generically titled album by ex-Sex Pistol John Lydon. What's so cool about *Compact Disc* is the fact that Vai—in his post-*Flex-Able* but pre-David Lee Roth era—couldn't script all of his licks or go back and fine tune phrases. The result is some of his freshest, most spirited playing.

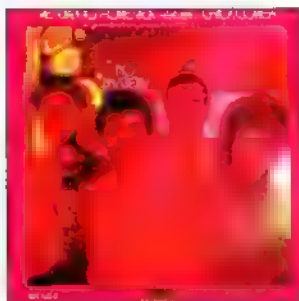
Using an unadorned, relatively dry tone, Vai plays chiming clean tones in "Rise" before cutting loose with some delightfully atonal whammy swoops. He cranks out freaky harmonized lines in "Round," and dials in an edgy tone for his angry solo in "Fishing." His coup de grace, however, is the extended break in "Ease." Here, Vai is totally on fire, playing with the sort of abandon that made *Flex-Able* and Alcatraz's *Disturbing the Peace* such landmarks of rock chops. Although the setting is *totally* foreign, every lick is unmistakably Vai.



TREVOR RABIN *Can't Look Away*, 1989

If you liked how Trevor Rabin mixed things up with seminal prog rockers Yes in 1983, you'll love the fact that he stretches out on guitar even more here. "I Didn't Think It Would Last" features fantastic funk solos, the instrumental "Sludge" boasts superb syncopated lines and demented soloing that'll make your head spin, and the pop gem "Hold on to Me" finds Rabin dialing in his trademark, squished-to-death acoustic tones for a stunningly gorgeous solo. Besides jaw-dropping playing and great compositions, half the fun of

Can't Look Away is Rabin's penchant for cooking up singular guitar tones. Whether playing acoustic or electric, there's simply no one that sounds like him.



RETURN TO FOREVER *No Mystery*, 1975

In the '70s, fusion ruled supreme, and keyboardist Chick Corea's Return to Forever was the genre's leading ambassador. The band's fifth album, *No Mystery*, not only won a Grammy (Best Jazz Performance by a Group), it actually made the Top 40!

No Mystery was Al Di Meola's second record with RTF (he re-

placed Bill Connors), and listeners who feel Di Meola's solo work is too clinical will love the fact his playing here has a looser, off-the-cuff feel. Throughout the record, he stretches time with his elastic phrasing, and he even lets his bluesy side come out on "Jungle Waterfall." Armed with a Les Paul Custom, a 50-watt Marshall half-stack, a Colorsound wah, and a Maestro Four-Range Booster, Di Meola's tone also sports a menacing, unpolished flair that proved jazz/rock could actually rock.



JIMMIE RIVERS AND THE CHEROKEES *Brisbane Bop*, 1995

By the end of the 1950s, a truncated version of the Cherokees—once a proud tribe of western swingsters—was earning its wampum as the house band at a rowdy Brisbane, California, honky-tonk called the 23 Club. Between 1961 and 1964, many of the band's 23 Club gigs were captured on a portable tape machine, and the result is *Brisbane Bop*—a collection of 19 songs that showcases the bodacious talents of guitarist Jimmie Rivers and steel whiz (and ex-Texas Playboys member) Vance Terry. The duo's complex twin-guitar arrangements are mesmerizing, and both players perform jaw-dropping antics that reveal their astonishing grasp of country, jazz, and swing. This is *really* amazing stuff—at times Terry crafts pedal-steel harmonies that sound almost like a big-band horn section. And when you consider these guys were pulling this stuff off amidst bare-knuckled brawls caused by excess consumption of firewater, it's even more amazing!



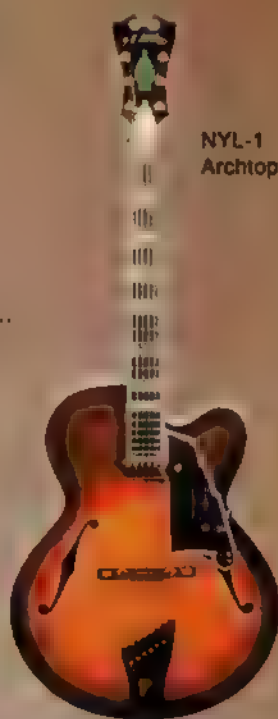
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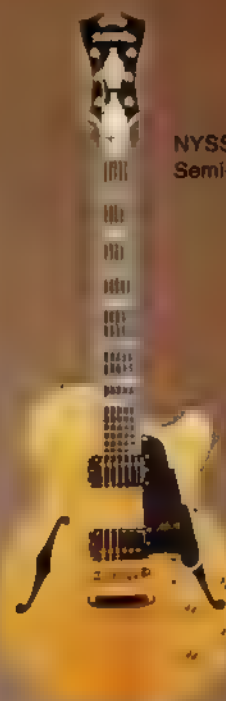
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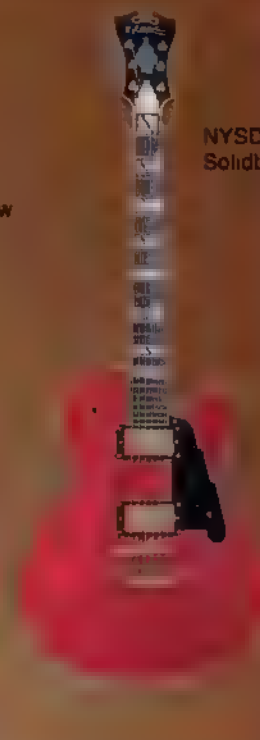
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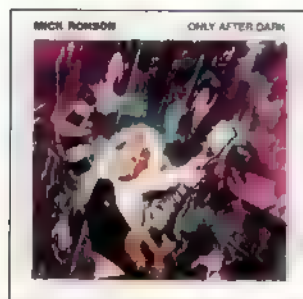
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MICK RONSON

Only After Dark, 1995

■ A compilation of Mick Ronson's two '70s-era solo albums (*Slaughter on 10th Avenue* and *Play Don't Worry*), *Only After Dark* is a tribute to the late guitarist's arrangement and production chops, stylistic eclecticism, and balls-out power. Ronson's musicality is so tremendous that you could pull dozens of sonic and melodic ideas from the intro of "Angel No. 9" alone. (The wah-driven crescendo could raise goosebumps from a corpse.) Ronson's discomfort with being a frontman may have torched his chances for becoming the "next Bowie," but that's all about commerce. The man's rock and roll soul was forever true, and this album shows just how much he meant every note he played.



STEVIE SALAS

Back from the Living, 1994

■ Despite penning tunes for big-name artists and landing gigs with George Clinton, Rod Stewart, and Mick

Jagger, Stevie Salas' solo albums have received little attention. But one listen to *Back from the Living* will prove that a lot of people are missing out on something wonderful. Sporting an impeccably soulful sense of rhythm and melody, a keen songwriting sensibility, and loads of funky ferocity, Salas has it all—in the guitar and vocal departments. The adrenaline-soaked opener "Tell Your Story Walkin'" starts things off in high gear with jolting riffs, skanky fills, wicked wah solos, and a voice that sounds like a young James Brown delving into hard rock. Throughout the album, every solo is tastefully placed and absolutely raging.



SCORPIONS

Tokyo Tapes, 1978

■ In the late '70s, most rock bands felt compelled—as if by law—to put out a live record. The Scorpions complied with *Tokyo Tapes*—a great compendium of their lesser-known and considerably more adventurous early material. Rudolf Schenker provides rock-solid rhythm throughout, but the star of this show is Ulrich Roth, who effortlessly bridges the gap between Hendrix and Bach with a huge tone, insane whammy-bar work, and absolutely massive chops.

With a Fender Strat and a Marshall Super Lead Tremolo, Roth blazes through "Pictured Life" and "Steamrock Fever," plays beautiful melodic lines in "Dark Lady," and simply goes nuts in "Speedy's Coming." It's clear from these tracks why he would become such a big influence on neoclassical shred-

ders. If you only know the Scorpions for their formulaic mid-'80s output, this album will knock you down.



SENSATIONAL ALEX HARVEY BAND

The Impossible Dream, 1974

■ Guitarist Zal Cleminson had the great luck and misfortune to fall in with a mad genius named Alex Harvey. On the good side, Cleminson's tenure with SAHB brought him the critical glory of being in a barrier-breaking act that mixed hard rock with theater, and fused British music-hall styles with glam pretension and hippy-dippy idealism. No wonder the best SAHB albums are considered lost classics by European hipness custodians such as *Mojo* and *Q*. The not-so-great part was that Cleminson had to paint his face in a Pierrot-style mask and wear a puppet outfit onstage. American audiences were not amused.

But within the circus that was SAHB, Cleminson's SG-fueled riffery was astounding. On *The Impossible Dream*, he uncorks jaw-dropping performances on "Vambo" (snakey wah pirouettes), "Weights Made of Lead" (stuttering, Uzi-like sweeps), "River of Love" (hammer-headed chordal punches), and "Anthem" (a soaring duet with bagpipes). Cleminson's getup may have looked silly, but the man's playing was a dead-serious fusion of dizzying technique, melodic brilliance, grand pretension, and rock-stud bombast. He's probably the greatest '70-era guitar hero you've never heard.



SONNY SHARROCK

Ask the Ages, 1991

■ A twisted combo plate of dinner-jazz melodies, guitar and sax duets, feedback howls, atonal riffs, and noise splatters, *Ask the Ages* shows why the late Sonny Sharrock is an iconoclast all guitarists should get to know. Few avant-garde guitarists honor lyrical melodicism, intellectualism, and tonal deconstruction with equal fervor as Sharrock. He was also a master at pounding a single idea towards hypnotic repetition, then shocking the listener with a manic wall of tortured weirdness. If you're tired of playing the same old licks, look to Sharrock's unfettered approach for inspiration.



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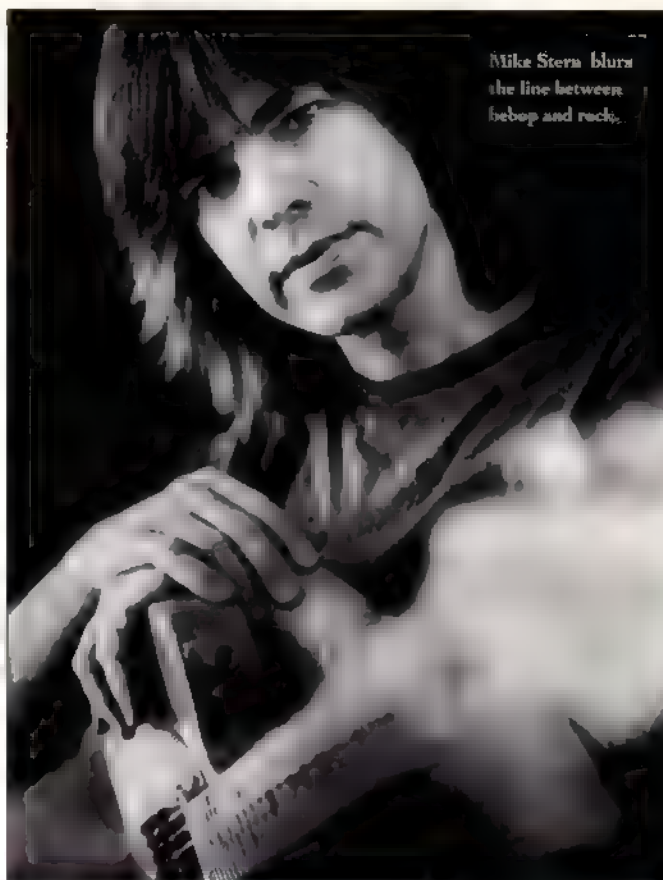
OAH, 2000

■ It's difficult to categorize *OAH*, but David Torn's gorgeous, sometimes disturbing, arrangements sound kind of like a head-banging Indian Brahmin who—armed with a collection of primitive instruments, a couple of electrics, and a killer tube amp—time-traveled to a 22nd-century jam with aliens. To create his otherworldly masterpieces,

Buried Treasures

Torn warps and mutates improvised jams or "cells" (which range from less than a second to a few minutes in length) using digital-editing software such as Emagic's Logic Audio, Sonic Foundry's Acid, and Native Instruments' Reaktor. The manipulated cells are then used to create rhythmic backdrops, over which Torn adds *more* magnificent madness with guitar, Najarian oud, kikuyae, and other stringed instruments.

Torn's deft implementation shows that digital editing and guitar can coexist peacefully, and the process doesn't have to render your guitar lifeless and sterile. His compositions may be totally off the wall, but Torn's guitar tones—which range from



Mike Stern blurs the line between bebop and rock.

feedback-soaked fusillades ("Hedewa" and "Chrysanthemum Bang") to pristine finger-picked passages ("Wave from Water" and "Unravelling")—are lush, organic, and dripping with complexity.



MIKE STERN

Upside Downside, 1986

Don't let the smooth taste fool you—this album rocks. Ignore the glossy keyboard patches and '80s drum sounds, and you'll find that Mike Stern burns a hole in every groove with scorching leads and turbo bebop runs. And even when he plays at the speed of light, his phrases remain lyrical and legit.

Catchy themes such as "Scuffle" and "Little Shoes" are angular and challenging, and when Stern steps on his Boss DS-1—watch out. Attacking the furthest reaches of harmony with distorted, single-note sorties, Stern streaks across the sky like Charlie Parker in the cockpit of an F-16.



STEPHEN STILLS

Stephen Stills, 1970

Following stints with Buffalo Springfield and Crosby, Stills & Nash, Stephen Stills launched his solo career with a self-titled debut album that



David Torn waxing cellular on his TransTrem-equipped Klein electric.



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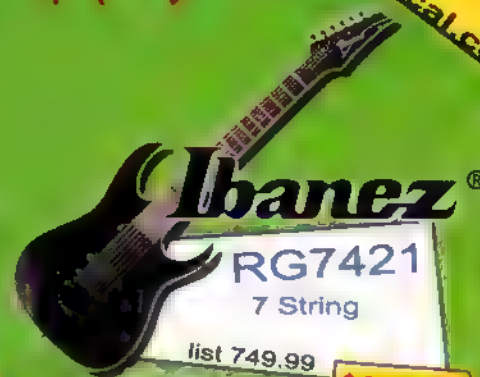
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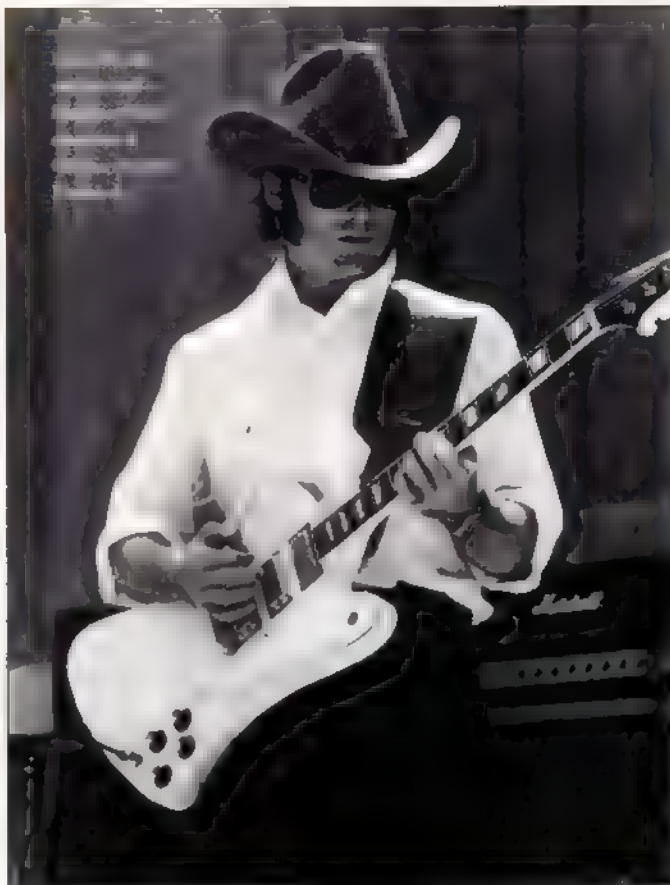
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spawned the hit "Love the One You're With." Besides singing and playing great guitar (not to mention handling the organ, piano, and percussion parts), the multi-talented Stills did an extremely cool thing by getting Jimi Hendrix and Eric Clapton to guest on the album. Hendrix fulfills his sideman role with a moderately distorted tone that sounds as if he's running straight into a Fender amp. You might not even guess it's him until he finally gives himself away with his trademark octave excursions. On the other hand, Clapton sounds very much like himself from the moment he steps into the ending solo on "Go Back Home" (which also features tasty wah-wah work



MARK MANDER

by Stills). Clapton's stinging tone is classic, and the extended chorus gives him plenty of time to work his bluesy magic. Cool stuff!



THIN LIZZY

Black Rose:

A Rock Legend, 1979

Although Gary Moore had been a member of Thin Lizzy in the early '70s, his return to the band for the *Black Rose* album went largely unnoticed by the guitar-playing community. It's a pity, because the album would be his last studio effort with the group, and it featured strong

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songs and killer, wall-to-wall guitar—courtesy of Moore and Scott Gorham. Much of *Black Rose* is Moore's show, with amazing leads in "S & M" and "Got to Give It Up." He also proved himself a world-class pop guitarist with his gorgeous, clean-toned fills on the tender "My Sarah."

Despite its variety of styles—which included rock, funk, Celtic, and pop—*Black Rose* is a very cohesive work. The cool dual-guitar harmonies that made Lizzy famous are still here, and the title track—where the two guitarists seamlessly blend Celtic melodies and hard-rock riffing before treating you to an absolutely *burning* end section—is stunning.



TIN MACHINE

Tin Machine, 1989

After his disappointing mid- to late-'80s solo efforts, David Bowie thrust himself into a band situation designed to obliterate all pretense of pop savvy and hit potential. When forming Tin Machine, Bowie went for the throat by bringing in the thunderously tight yet infamously unruly Sales brothers as a rhythm section, and topping that off with Reeves Gabrels—a guitarist with a sonic mean streak.

"I wanted to combine David's gift of melody with ag-

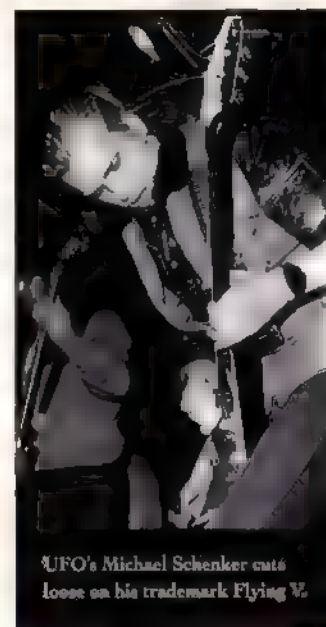
gressive, noise-oriented guitar," said Gabrels, who splatters *Tin Machine* with what were to become his trademarks: ring-modulated shrieks, atonal shards of feedback, and a general disregard for all things "tasty." Not surprisingly, Tin Machine never took off. Still, *Tin Machine* ranks as one of Bowie's edgiest endeavors, and it's a goldmine for snotty, devil-may-care guitar.



UFO

Obsession, 1978

Although Michael Schenker's notoriously unreliable work ethic prevented



UFO's Michael Schenker cuts loose on his trademark Flying V.

him from enjoying anything but cult-hero status, his inventiveness, distinctive tone, and flat-out burning while with UFO are beyond reproach, and he would deeply influence Randy Rhoads, Vinnie Moore, Mike Tempesta,

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and many others.

The pinnacle of Schenker's work was *Obsession*, the last studio album he would record with UFO until his 1995 return to the band. Here, his unmistakable tone—created by plugging a Gibson Flying V into a wah pedal set to its mid position, and then into a plexi Marshall—is in full swing, and he showcases it with memorable solos on every tune. The guitar melodies in "Hot 'n' Ready" and "Cherry" are catchy and hummable, and his cadenza in "Born to Lose" is a stunning example of compositional skill. Although Schenker never attained a great deal of commercial success, his playing on *Obsession* stands as a melodic-metal tour de force.



WEATHER REPORT

8:30, 1979

 If there's a joker in every deck, you've just drawn it. Why? Because this exhilarating live album has not one note of guitar on it. It *does*, however, feature the transcendent Jaco Pastorius, who was the electric bass' nearest equivalent to Jimi Hendrix. The fiery melodicism, deep-pocket grooves, and raw physicality that Pastorius brought to the jazz-fusion world is something every guitarist should check out. In fact, his monster 15/8 lick on "Black Market," the




MARK MANDER

loop. Then, he launches into an over-the-top, distortion-drenched rendition of Hendrix's "Third Stone from the Sun." And, as they say, the crowd goes wild.



JOHNNY WINTER

Johnny Winter And...Live, 1971

 When Johnny Winter and Rick Derringer teamed up to record *Johnny Winter And In 1970*, the result was an engaging studio album that highlighted the songwriting skills of the two guitarists, while somewhat downplaying their famed 6-string abilities. The band's

angular head on "Teentown," and the octave harmonics on "Birdland" found their way into the lexicon of jazz guitar because they rule on *any* instrument.

The show stopper is "Slang," where the fretless deity stacks four parts into a hypnotic, funky

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Buried Treasures

subsequent live release, however, took the exact opposite approach by turning Derringer and Winter loose in a gladiator-style lead-guitar duel that would have made Caligula giggle with delight. Setting the stage with a blitzkrieg version of "Good Morning Little Schoolgirl," both players unleash wave after wave of machine-gun solos, but save some of their gnarliest ammo for "It's My Own Fault" (one of the most explosive slow-blues tunes ever recorded) and "Mean Town Blues" (which features incendiary slide work by Winter). If you subscribe to the notion that the only live albums worth spinning are those that kick *unmiltgated* ass, this is one you won't want to miss.

Robben Ford in the late '70s with a Gibson ES-335.



JIMMY WITHERSPOON *Spoonful, 1975*

Jimmy Witherspoon and Robben Ford had worked together for several years before recording *Spoonful*, and the elder blues/jazz/R&B great had certainly witnessed the sheer power of the young Ford's guitar playing. Backed by an all-star cast including keyboardist Joe Sample, bassist Chuck Rainey, and guitarists Cornell Dupree and Buddy Lucas, Witherspoon and Ford turn in stellar performances. Ford prowls the tracks like a tiger stalking its prey, dart-

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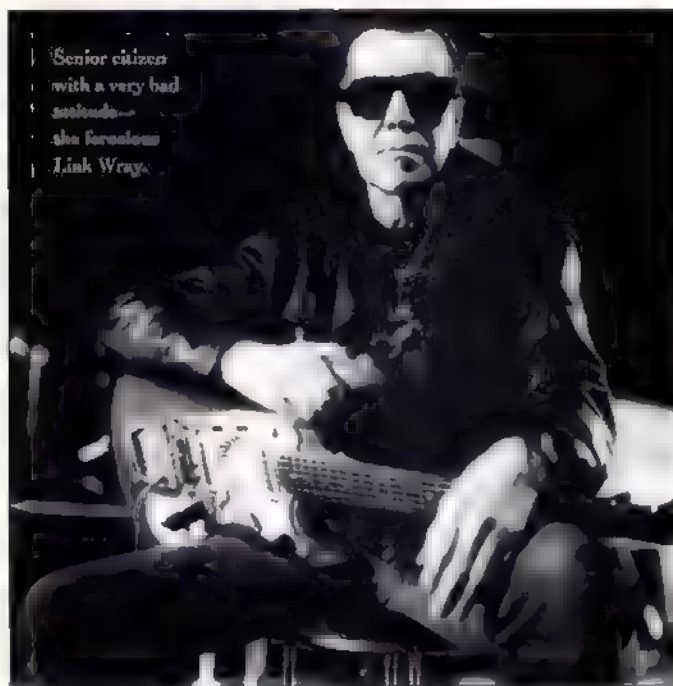
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ing at the changes and pouncing on the solo spots with bone-crushing force. Nowhere is Ford's touch more golden, however, than on "Nothing's Changed," where he cuts loose with a spell-

binding solo that truly showcases his ability to wring every last drop of emotion out of a slow blues number. His frazzled, pre-fusion-era tone is damned cool, too.

teenage garage band can deliver. But then, few youngsters could muster Wray's seminal passion or his brutal facility with a riff. As an added goodie, Wray's vocals are feral enough to front any rap-metal troupe on the planet—and the cat only has one lung! What's even more inspiring is that Wray commands the concert stage with the same ferocity as his guitar playing. Old? Not a chance.



LINK WRAY
Shadowman, 1997

If rock guitarists can aspire to be like Link Wray in their senior-citizen years, then Pete Townshend can stuff his "hope I die before I get old" mantra. Wray was 68 years old when he recorded *Shadowman*, and the album is as abrasive, loud, and downright scary as anything a



YES
Yes, 1969

Although Peter Banks was purportedly dumped for

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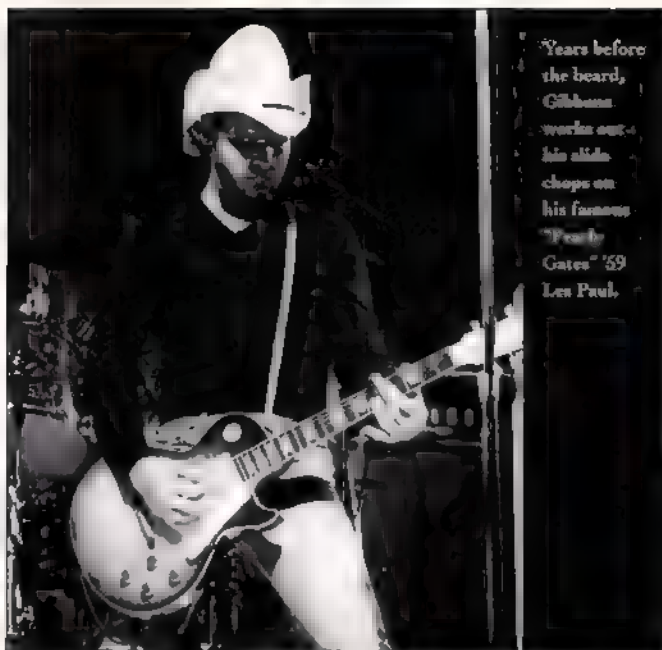
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Years before the beard, Gibbons works out his slide chops on his famous "Frank Gates" '59 Les Paul.

Steve Howe, Yes' eponymous debut shows he was no slouch. While Banks had a penchant for psychedelic, feedback-tinged freak outs, he could also whip out wicked jazz solos, and his parts occasionally sound like some-

thing Howe would have played. "Beyond and Before" travels all over the map, with Banks' odd-rhythm, one-note intro leading into raunchy wah washes, trippy tremolo treatments, chromatic volume swells, and tons of

fuzzed-out leads. On the Byrds' "I See You," Banks mixes beatnik-approved chording and jazzy riffing with an eclectic solo that starts out ferocious and angular, gets mellow, and then turns even more menacing. Attitude-wise, it's one of the most rocking Yes guitar solos ever.



ZZ TOP *Tejas*, 1976

Sandwiched between 1975's *Fandango!* and 1979's AOR fave *Deguello*, *Tejas* stands apart from every ZZ Top album before or since. Although Billy Gibbons had started to ex-

plore cleaner tones and modulation effects on *Fandango!*, *Tejas* finds Gibbons getting downright *textural*.

Classic ZZ fans had nothing to fear, however. Riding shotgun with washes of lap steel ("She's a Heartbreaker") and squirty envelope filter ("Snappy Kakkie") are Gibbons' trademark tonal rudeness and pinched harmonics. The track "Arrested for Driving While Blind" illustrates both traits nicely, as Gibbons turns in his meanest lead work this side of the classic "La Grange."

Unfortunately, the only way to get *Tejas* without the gross remastering found on the group's ill-advised *Six Pack* (in which they added cheesy digital effects and drum samples to virtually all of their pre-'80s work) is to find an old vinyl copy. Hopefully, justice will prevail someday, and *Tejas*—as well as all of ZZ Top's early albums—will get the proper reissue treatment they so rightly deserve.

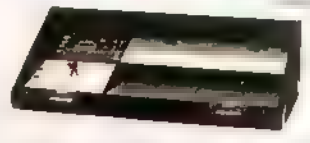
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Bench Tests

Stir of Echos

Line 6 Echo Pro

By Matt Blackett

Just when you think delay units can get no cooler than the Line 6 DL4 pedal, here comes the Echo Pro (\$699), a rack version with more memory, better sound quality, rhythmic subdivisions for tap tempo, more flexible connections, and powerful MIDI features.

Echo Park

Anyone familiar with the DL4 (reviewed July 2000) will recognize the effects and parameters on the Echo Pro. All the delay models are

present (with the exception of Rhythmic Delay, which has been replaced by the awesome Echo Platter), and they all sound great. The Echo Pro's effects are clean, warm, and—because many of them do creative, freaky things to the repeats—very inspiring to play. Some of the cooler old-school delays include Tube Echo (based on the Maestro Echoplex EP-1), Echo Platter (inspired by the Binson Echorec magnetic platter echo), and Analog Echo w/Mod (a chorused echo based

Snapshot

Based on the Editors' Pick Award-winning DL4 Delay Modeler pedal, Line 6's rack-mountable Echo Pro (\$699) provides 15 vintage- and modern-style echo effects, a 60-second loop sampler, and a host of cool ways to tweak and control the delays in real time. The Echo Pro also receives an Editors' Pick Award.

on the Electro-Harmonix Deluxe Memory Man). Of the newer delays, I love Dynamic Delay (a ducking delay effect à la T.C. Electronic 2290) and Sweep Echo, a Line 6 original that's an incredibly musical filtered delay.

As on the DL4, you get control over delay time, repeats, and mix—as well as two additional

parameters with the Tweak and Tweez knobs. The latter two controls govern different parameters, depending on which effect is selected, and Line 6 has done a great job of choosing the two most logical ones (such as modulation speed and depth for the chorused echoes, bass and treble for the digital delay, and wow &



The Ratings Game		Sounds	Flexibility	Programmability	Ease of use	Value
Line 6 Echo Pro		★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★

The Rate-O-Meter: Dismal = ♥ —————> Excellent = ♥♥♥♥♥

flutter and drive for the Tube Echo and Echo Platter). Even cooler—thanks to the Echo Pro's illuminated dials—is that you can tell exactly which parameters are active without consulting the manual. Compared to the DL4, the Pro's interface makes it a lot easier to see what's going on, although the button names are invisible unless the unit is right at eye level.

What Else Is New?

The Echo Pro features an expanded tap-tempo section that allows for several rhythmic subdivisions. Tap in quarter-notes on the front panel, and the Echo Pro will spit out anything from whole notes to sixteenth-note triplets. This is an amazingly useful feature that makes dialing-in rhythmic delay effects much more intuitive. To get Albert Lee-style cascading repeats, for instance, just set the

patch for dotted eighth-notes, tap in quarter-notes, then *play* eighth-notes and watch the jaws drop. If your drummer speeds up or slows down, all you have to do is tap quarter-notes to get back in the groove. Of course, that's assuming you have either a free hand or a programmable MIDI foot controller, because, despite its great interface, the Echo Pro does *not* feature a dedicated tap-tempo jack. Granted, this is a studio piece, but it sounds so cool that players *will* want to gig with it, and the option of connecting a footswitch to control tap tempo would make stage use way easier.

On the subject of tempo, the Echo Pro also responds to MIDI clock information, so if you're playing to sequenced tracks, your delays will lock in automatically (those same sequences can change patches for you, as well).

Loop the Loop

One of the DL4's cooler functions is its 14-second Loop Sampler. Line 6 has upped the ante considerably on the Echo Pro with a generous 60 seconds of looping time (two minutes in half-speed mode). And not only can you loop a phrase, you can loop it with or without delay, then overdub (with or without delay), and then flip the whole phrase backward or play it at half-speed, or both. You can track one line, flip it backward, and then overdub on top of it to end up with one line going forward and one going backward. I did this with a simple

C major scale and got two different envelopes on each note for a super-cool, otherworldly effect. Because there are no jacks for footswitches to control the loop functions, however, you'll need a MIDI foot controller, which will allow you to toggle between the most important functions (record, play, stop) with a single button.

Delay Reaction

Once you choose a delay and program it to your liking, plugging in an expression pedal allows you to manipulate several of the patch's parameters on the fly. This is great for normal stuff like varying

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Bench Tests

Stir of Echos

the mix level, but it also gives rise to some really bizarre effects. For example, using a pedal to alter the

delay time and repeats for the Tape Echo model will take your pretty, warm echo and turn it into a freak show. Nice. By accessing some of these deeper features you

can play the Echo Pro almost like a musical instrument.

The Echo Pro is a great-sounding, intuitive processor. It doesn't try to do everything under the sun, but for a box that is "just a delay," it's incredibly powerful. At \$699, the Echo Pro faces stiff com-

petition from some well-known companies, but it more than holds its own. If you run sequenced tracks and want to dress them up or freak them out, the Echo Pro is a no-brainer. But even if you can't spell MIDI and just want a cool delay, it's *still* a great choice. **E**

Gizmo Alert Danelectro '60s Pedals

Remember simple joys? Danelectro does, and the company's series of '60s pedals will bathe you in cheerful rays of psychedelic sunshine. From the peace symbol logos to the faux hand-painted faces to the time-warp timbres, these monaural stompboxes are ambassadors of grooviness. The only concessions to the bummers of the modern world are casings built more like Humvees than VW buses. Each \$149 pedal can run on 9-volt battery power (a sturdy plastic and rubber hatch provides battery access), but I recommend popping for the optional AC adaptor—these babies run out of gas faster than a 1969 Lincoln Continental.

Back Talk

While each of the three pedals in the current lineup guarantees bliss, I attained absolute nirvana with the Back Talk DR-1 reverse delay. The sound is pristine, the controls are dead simple (mix, speed, repeats), and the cool factor is through the roof. During a studio session, I plugged into the Back Talk to add a little something different to a second verse. It took a few takes to adjust my picking attack to the effect—my preliminary attempts were marred by a self-inflicted click just before the backwards phrase was triggered—but I soon stumbled upon a strangely undulating "cat cry" that was the perfect ear candy for the track. In fact, the bandleader loved the bit so

much that she insisted I use the Back Talk for some outro lines. A few swoops, bends, and pull-offs on my G&L ASAT Classic produced a guru-approved trip reminiscent of the end of "All You Need Is Love." How cool is *that*?

Psycho Flange

"Triple-thick flanging" is imprinted on the face of the Psycho Flange DF-1, and it's the ideal description for a pedal that sounds as creamy as an old-time malted. But this box doesn't stop at syrupy sensuality—

you can play with the speed, regeneration, and width controls to dial in everything from Siouxsie and the Banshees warbles to Hendrix-like swooshes and swirls. In some live situations, however, the Psycho Flange's inherent fatness might harsh your mellow. When you activate the effect, you also trigger a low-end boost that could muddy your tone enough to prevent it from punching out of the band mix. But if you take care to match the right guitar, amp, and/or EQ setting to the flange

flavor you desire, you'll be rewarded with an awesomely vibey tone.

Sitar Swami

Of all the '60s series pedals, the Sitar Swami DDS-1 sitar simulator requires the most cooperation from the player to achieve suitable results. If you just plug in and wail, you'll likely be baffled by a cranky pitch-shift effect and a swelling, indistinct drone that can't be diminished. But play chimy single-note lines filled with half-steps (such as a gypsy minor scale) and add some quarter-tone bends, and the Swami almost magically transports you to maharishi-ville. Alternate tunings can also enhance your Ravi Shankar moments, and the Swami's two controls are extremely use-

ful—the output level ensures your ragas are heard over the band, and the EQ knob lets you somewhat tailor the intensity of the sitar emulation. Danelectro includes a glass "Dano-Slide" to "accentuate your sitar experience," but slide work only calls attention to the pedal's distracting drone. But even though the Swami isn't exactly a plug-and-play affair, you'd have to be a grumpy establishment-type not to dig this pedal!

—MICHAEL MOLENDRA

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Bench Tests

Rancho Deluxe

Gretsch G6012P Rancher 16

By Michael Molenda

From the '30s deco vibe of the Synchromatic models to the cowboy cool of the classic Ranchers, Gretsch acoustics have always been eye catchers. But now the company has turned up the visual heat with its "Sweet Sixteen" line of Rancher jumbos in resplendent colors such as regal blue, anniversary green, candy apple red, tangerine, and purple. Before you play a note, band members, audiences, and session mates will "ooh" and "ahh" the first time they're treated to the sight of these babies. But the G6012P Rancher 16 isn't just a pretty face. It projects an expansive and sexy sparkle whether you flatpick or fingerpick, and it records like a dream.

Snapshot

The Gretsch G6012P Rancher 16

(\$1,650) is a well-crafted acoustic with looks that kill and a gorgeous sound that will thrill fingerpickers and flatpickers alike.



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Spring King

- Volume control
- Tone control
- Reverb control
- Kick Pad
- Bypass footswitch

Echoes of the Past

"take off" by changing the delay time, all you get is digital glitching—that's *one* classic Echoplex effect you can't get with the Reel Echo.

Head To Head. The Reel Echo works best when connected between a guitar and an amp. When patched into an amp's effects loop, there was a noticeable degradation of signal quality. (It did, however, work quite well as an outboard processor in the aux loop of my recording mixer, so go figure.) The pedal's input is flexible enough to handle pickups ranging from mellow to mega-hot, and the unit worked well when

chained together with other pedals.

Does the Reel Echo sound exactly like an Echoplex? Of course not—but it does capture a great deal of the original's vibe. The Warble effect sounds more like a very nice chorus than tape flutter to me, and only the first half of the lo-fi knob's range is particularly useful. Still, I was able to get some great sounds by using them in combination with the tone switch. My favorite

setting was Warble on, lo-fi off, and tone switched to tube

One very important characteristic that the Reel Echo *does* have in common with the Echoplex is that it is fun and inspiring to use. Add to that the Reel Echo's no-maintenance and hassle-free performance, easy portability, and bargain price, and you'll want to rush right down to your local music store without delay...delay...delay.

Spring King

The pale-yellow Spring King is an analog device containing an actual reverb tank with three eight-inch springs. Its three brown chicken-headed control knobs couldn't be simpler to use: Volume controls the input level to the reverb tank (*not* the overall volume), tone darkens or brightens the color of the reverb, and reverb determines how much effect is blended with the dry signal. The front panel also contains an oval-shaped rubber Kick Pad. This isn't connected to anything, it just provides a convenient spot to give the Spring King a good whack should you decide to add some clamorous "boings" to your performance.

After donning my baggies and waxing my board, I put the Spring King through its paces. I patched the pedal between a Les Paul and a Rivera Thirty-Two amp, and the first thing I noticed was that even with the King's volume control all the way down, the unit still produced a slight cinderblock room sound. Though that wasn't a particularly pleasing effect, I was quickly able to dial in more desirable sounds by increasing the volume and setting the tone and reverb controls to twelve o'clock. That brought the King to life, and soon I was surfing through a surprising variety of tonal possibilities.

The key to getting the best performance out of the Spring King is adjusting the input volume properly—too little level and it sounds tinny and wimpy, too much and it gets nasty. The other two controls are also effective over their entire ranges. The tone control provides a nice palate of coloration from dark and muffled to bright and ultra-springy, and the reverb control gradually introduces more wet signal into the mix, rather than heaping it on all at once.

The Spring King's tone can't compare to, say, a Fender tube spring reverb, or even a full-sized spring reverb in a good guitar amp. After all, there are no tubes to give it that sort of smoothness and warmth. Nonetheless, Dano's new box has *lots* of personality—and at \$199, the King rules!

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Bench Tests

Rancho Deluxe

Workmanship & Feel

The look of the Rancher is so dazzling that it almost dares you to find any flaws. The exquisite finish is jewel-like, the pearl inlays are as sharp as Frank Sinatra's tux, and the binding is immaculate. A more microscopic inspection reveals the frets are not highly polished, and, as a consequence, they project a brassy-green hue. Appearance aside, the Rancher would play a tad smoother if the frets were buffed to a mirror-like sheen. On

the inside, the back bracing displays a bit of glue clumping, and the braces are not as clean—or as tight—as those on similarly priced acoustics.

Playability is marvelous. The Rancher was nicely set up out of the case, and it coddles electric players with a low action and a neck that inspires fast runs and aggressive chording. Fingerstylists will find the neck to be very inviting, and the string spacing exceedingly comfy. There's also a marvelous transfer of resonance to your body when you sit down and play. The Rancher simply feels good, and it seems to call

Contact Info

Gretsch, Box 2468, Savannah, GA 31402; (912) 748-7070, gretsch.com.

out to you whenever you leave it alone for too long. This is one of those guitars that has a lot of songs inside it—and they're all just waiting for someone to discover them.

Wide-Open Sonic Spaces

When you're strumming all by your lonesome, the Rancher sounds sweet and sensual. There are no hyped treble or bass frequencies—the guitar projects a

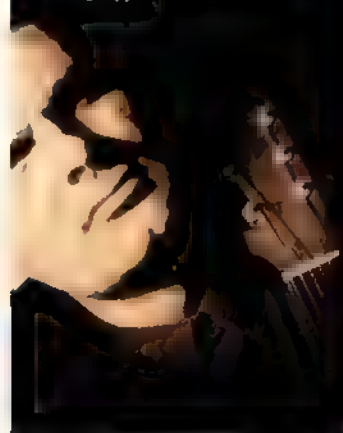
vintage mellowness that's smooth as silk. In addition, the Rancher is extremely dynamic. Soft passages sound tight and dainty, but when ya gotta wail, the guitar opens up with a loud and resounding shimmer—there's virtually no compression when you punish the strings. And whether you flatpick or fingerpick, the Rancher maintains the same, well-balanced timbral characteristics.

In the studio, the guitar always records beautifully. It

The Ratings Game	Tone	Playability	Workmanship	Materials	Vibe	Value
Gretsch Rancher 16	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★

The Rate-O-Meter: Dismal = ♥ —————> Excellent = ♥♥♥♥♥

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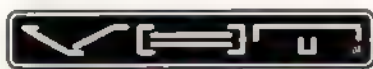
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Rancho Deluxe

doesn't seem to matter whether you use expensive condenser mics or an inexpensive dynamic such as a Shure SM57—the tones are striking each and every time. In stereo-miking situations—such as positioning a large-diaphragm condenser near the soundhole and a small-diaphragm condenser a few inches from the 12th fret—the Rancher delivers a wide and dimensional tonal spectrum that oozes from the speakers to envelop the listener. Very sexy! The only time I had to use mixer EQ—rather than mic selection and positioning—to elicit a desired tone was when I layered the Rancher under some distorted electric-guitar tracks. The acoustic's mellow temperament needed a little help to bust through the mix.

Home on the Range

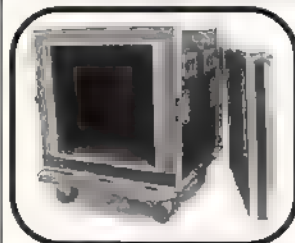
At a retail price of \$1,650, the vibe-rich Rancher is in the same arena as some excellent acoustics from other makers. A few of those competitors will boast a more complex sound and slightly cleaner workmanship. But few will match the Rancher's magnificent balance of head-turning looks and glorious sonics. The Rancher may be an extrovert's kind of acoustic, but how many shy guitarists do you know? I say, strap on this beauty and strut!

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Peacemaker



Peacemaker 50



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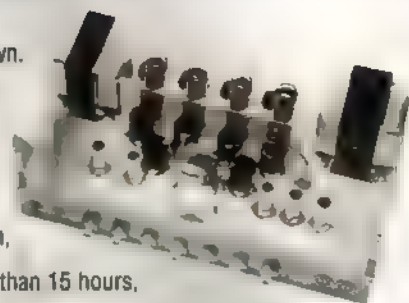
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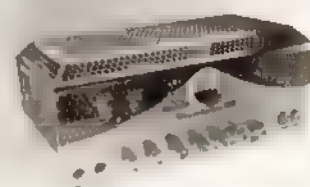
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Bench Tests

New Gun

Brawley A-124 Threat Limited Floyd Rose

By Art Thompson

For most of his adult life, Keith Brawley has been in the guitar business. As a player, teacher, retailer, factory rep, product designer, and marketing executive, Brawley has lived and breathed guitars. Now Brawley has launched his own line of affordable, high-quality instruments that are designed to go toe-to-toe with mid-line models from other well-known makers.

The Korean-made A-124 Threat (\$750) is an arched-top rocker that sports a thin cap of figured maple. The flawlessly finished, Louisiana swamp-ash body has a comfy back contour and a nicely rounded heel, and the neck pocket is so tight you can't slip a business card between the joint. Nicely shaped and satiny smooth, the one-piece Canadian-maple neck features a rosewood fretboard and a headstock that looks a bit like a shark's head. The painted facing grooves nicely with the black, die-cast tuners.

Playability

The Threat plays exceedingly well thanks to its low action and large, smooth frets. Players accustomed to shred-style, thin/wide necks might find the Threat's stick a little on the chunky side, but its medium profile should appeal to most players. Though you can wail on the trem pretty hard without any problems, extreme, stop-to-stop whammy action did cause some tuning discrepancies on our early production model. Perhaps this is due to the fact that the springs rub against the bottom

Snapshot

The Brawley A-124 Threat (\$749) is a slick-playing, affordable rock machine that sports dual humbuckers, a figured-maple top, and a Floyd Rose-licensed double-locking trem.



Bench Tests

New Gun

of the cavity when the arm is pressed to the point where the strings begin to go slack.

The Threat's pickups are controlled by master volume and tone knobs and a 3-way selector. The tone control also incorporates a push-pull function that enables you to select a tapped-coil mode for enhanced clarity. Lifting off the control cover reveals reasonably neat wiring and quality parts.

Threatening Sounds

Agile and light at 7.5 lbs, the

Threat makes good on its promise to deliver tough tones. The pickups are loud and bright, but you can hammer down in the bridge position without excessive spikiness. Conjugating thick grind from a Vox AC30 or a Matchless Chief-tain was no problem, and I obtained deliciously heavy rhythm and lead tones through a Budda Superdrive II. Played through a Marshall JCM800, the Threat lacked clarity in the low mids, but it sounded tight and punchy through a Yamaha FX-60 modeling combo. Tapping on the body or bridge at high-gain settings elicits a *lot* of mechanical noise.

Contact Info

Brawley Guitars, 27633 Commerce Center Dr., Temecula, CA 92590;
(909) 699-2428; brawleyguitars.com.

The Threat is almost like a chambered instrument in this regard.

The volume control preserves high-end detail when you turn down, and the tone circuit offers useful shadings throughout most of its range. Pulling the tone knob cuts the volume noticeably while providing crisper, airier tones. This tapped-coil mode produces hum in all positions, but it's a handy feature for clean rhythm playing, or for when you want to enhance the detail in grungified settings.

Serious Threat

Brawley has entered the market with a guitar that is well equipped to rock. An especially good choice for younger guitarists who don't have a ton of dough to fork out, the Threat is a pro-quality instrument that'll serve you well wherever your music takes you. With its sleek lines, excellent playability, and beefy tones, the Threat is a welcome addition to the mid-priced guitar scene.

The Ratings Game	Tone	Playability	Workmanship	Hardware	Vibe	Value
Brawley A-124 Threat	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★

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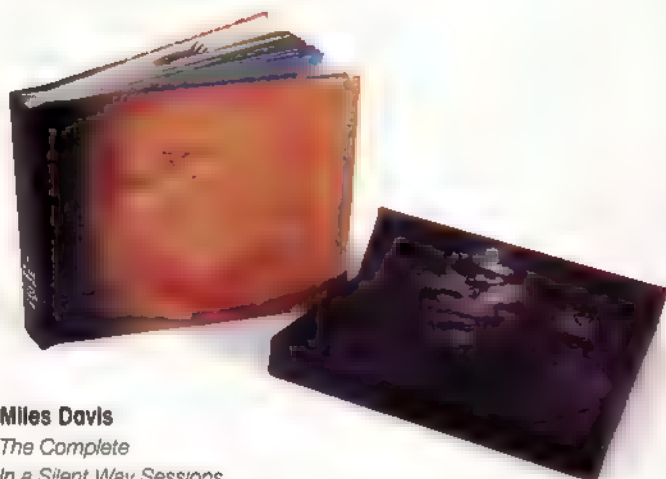
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D'Angelico Guitar Player

Reviews The Birth of Fusion

AUDIO



Miles Davis

*The Complete
In a Silent Way Sessions*

By the time Miles Davis recorded *In a Silent Way* in 1969, the world of jazz already had a rich guitar heritage. One thing was missing, however: Davis had yet to welcome the guitar into his oeuvre. *The Complete In a Silent Way Sessions* is a beautiful 3-CD document that chronicles Davis' first step into what was to be known as fusion.

The guitarist Davis chose to lead him down the 6-string path was a relative unknown from England named John McLaughlin. Although he had already recorded his own album as a leader (the amazing *Extrapolation*), *In a Silent Way* brought McLaughlin to the jazz masses. On *Silent Way Sessions*, McLaughlin never burns—he smolders. His tone is clean and rich as he solos over another new instrument Davis had brought into the fold, the Fender Rhodes. McLaughlin's playing displays a calm intensity, but nothing like the fury he

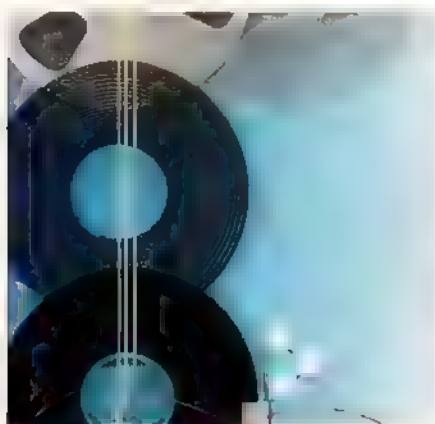
would unleash on Mahavishnu Orchestra's debut, *The Inner Mounting Flame*, two years later.

Although *In a Silent Way* is generally regarded as the birth of fusion, it's not a fusion album per se. The music is more understated and textural than the chops-heavy behemoth it eventually spawned. Thanks to unearthed tracks, *The Complete Sessions* does an amazing job of tracing Davis' steps from the end of his last great quintet (Davis, Wayne Shorter, Ron Carter, Tony Williams, and Herbie Hancock) to the funkier electric sounds that came to a head on the seminal *Bitches Brew*.

After the release of *In a Silent Way*, popular music was changed forever and lines were blurred both musically and culturally. With amazing liner notes and beautiful packaging, *The Complete In a Silent Way Sessions* provides an essential piece to modern music's vast puzzle. **Columbia/Legacy.** —DARRIN FOX



Miles Davis, circa 1969, poised to introduce John McLaughlin to the world.



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Reviews

Bobby Cochran



PRIVATE EDITION

Bobby Cochran

Private Edition

As the nephew of rock and roll pioneer Eddie Cochran, former Steppenwolf guitarist Bobby Cochran has the right blood flowing through his veins. Add to it the fact that his father co-wrote the rave up "Somethin' Else," and Cochran's lineage gets stronger still. It's no surprise, therefore, that Cochran's latest solo effort, *Private Edition*, is full of twangy riffs and hopped-up leads. Through the course of 13 tracks—originals, as well as tunes penned by his uncle and father—Cochran effortlessly blends his rock, blues, and country influences. He always sounds relaxed, even when he's really throwing

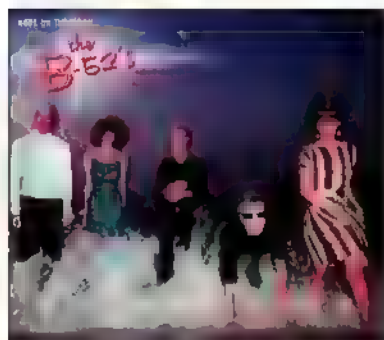
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down—as on his tradition-twisting breaks in “Honky Tonk,” and “Milk Cow Blues.” Cochran gets honest tones, chooses cool notes, and always sits deep in the pocket—all of which makes *Private Edition* a great record to steal licks from. Enjoy. *Wild Banshee*. — MATT BLACKETT



The B-52s
Nude on the Moon

Les Paul once chided some shred whiz by saying, “Hey, kid, you can really rip, but does your mom know who you are when she hears you on the radio?” The opposite was true of B-52s’ guitarist Ricky Wilson. He couldn’t shred to save his life—heck, his guitar only had four strings—but his chimney, funky, driving, twangy, and joy-filled licks were a huge neon billboard

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Reviews

to his singular sound. As documented on this new B-52s anthology, Wilson is proof that style can triumph over technique if your musical ideas lock ass and you worship the sound of the guitar. And who but a soulless brute *wouldn't* be moved and grooved by the churning spy riffs on "Rock Lobster," the propulsive chorus stabs on "Private Idaho," and the ominous stings on "Dance this Mess Around?" After Wilson passed away in 1985, drummer Keith Strickland honored his friend and bandmate by taking over the guitar duties. Strickland did a fine job—and the second disc of this compilation shows a still-vital act writing and performing great party songs (as well as nailing the monster hit "Love Shack")—but it's Wilson's tracks that you'll keep playing over and over **Rhino**. —MICHAEL MOLENDRA

Various Artists

Éthiopiennes: Vol. 6

Mahmoud Ahmed, "Almaz"

Éthiopiennes: Vol. 7

Mahmoud Ahmed, "Erè Mèla Mèla"

Éthiopiennes: Vol. 8: Swinging Addis

Three new installments have been added to the phenomenal *Éthiopiennes* series document the Ethiopian pop scene that flourished in the late '60s and early '70s before falling prey

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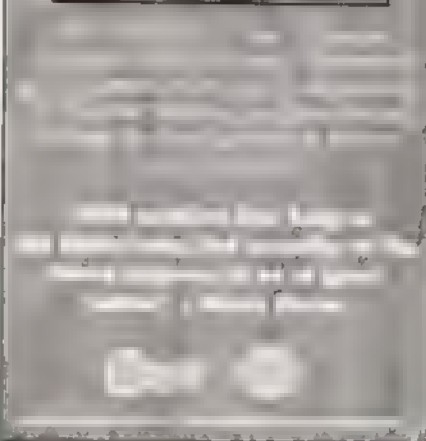
to war and famine. Like the earlier volumes, these discs depict one of the most potent feedback loops in music history: the era when African-American pop filtered back to the Motherland. Like Nigerian bandleader Fela Kuti's Afrobeat, Ethiopian soul is attuned to the era's hippest R&B developments—especially James Brown's—yet always sounds unmistakably African. Here you'll find such period funk staples as funky-drummer beats, hyperactive horn charts, and lots of wild guitar work, with an emphasis on razor-wire fuzz, speaker-shredding wah, and manic chicken-scratch comping. But you'll also encounter loose, camel-walk grooves, haunting modal melodies, spooky minor-key harmonies, and a uniquely loping approach to 12/8 grooves. Vol. 6 and Vol. 7 are devoted to a single artist: vocalist Mahmoud Ahmed, the scene's biggest star. But as amazing as Ahmed's eerily emotive vocals are, the best point of entry to this amazing style is probably the multi-artist Vol. 8. Recording quality throughout is as funky as the music, but that only adds to the atmosphere. **Buda Musique** (budamusique.com). —JOE GORI

New Order

Get Ready

It says a lot about New Order's enduring influence that when the long-dormant U.K.

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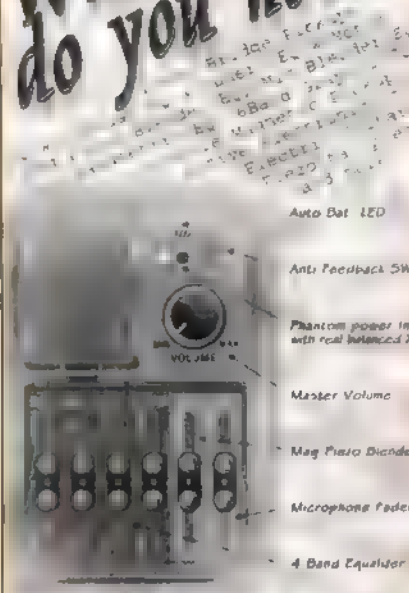


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Reviews

pop group emerges from its Manchester hidey-hole, their music sounds more like a well-engineered update than a desperate attempt to remain current. *Get Ready* recaps the group's familiar formula: deceptively simple songs that set dance-pop sequencing against live drums, Bernard Sumner's rolling-eighth-note rhythm playing, and Peter Hook's lead bass lines. But these instrumental tones—particularly the guitars—are rowdier and rougher than ever before. We're not talking a new fuzz pedal or two, but imaginative, pseudo-lo-fi processing via filtering, bit-crushing, input-clipping, reckless compression, faux-vinyl distortion, and all the other means by which digital audio lets you sound crappy-cool. It would be overstating the case to say New Order has returned to their post-punk roots as Joy Division, but these are surely the group's hardest and most impassioned tracks since the early Thatcher regime. **Reprise.** —JOE GORE



Smashmouth
Smashmouth

On the long and winding highway of groove, no genre is safe from the roving gang of musical rogues known as Smashmouth. They break into every style, and make off like bandits with speaker loads of rhythmic and timbral treasure. Then, back in their cave, producer/tone-guru Eric Valentine helps them alchemize the booty into groovilicious, platinum-selling ear candy. Whether the band is hot-wiring Farfisa-driven '60s lounge pop, psychedelic surf-guitar epics, phase-shifted disco throbs, four-on-the-floor AC/DC power rock, or synth-driven jungle jams, everybody wins—including you.

If Smashmouth are pirates on the seas of pop, rock, and soul, then their guitarist, Greg Camp, is Captain Hook—not only does he write most of the music, he typically pens their catchy lyrics and melodies. And on this new, self-titled release, Camp delivers a striking bouquet of guitar textures, diving into spring-reverb tanks, surfing waves of distortion, and scuttle-burting through funk pockets. Kudos to Camp and Smashmouth for hoisting the

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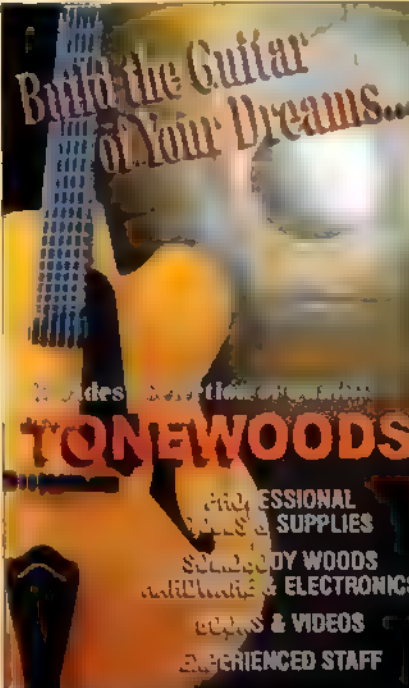
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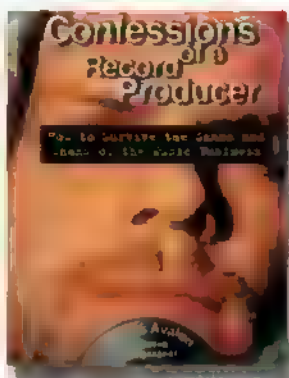
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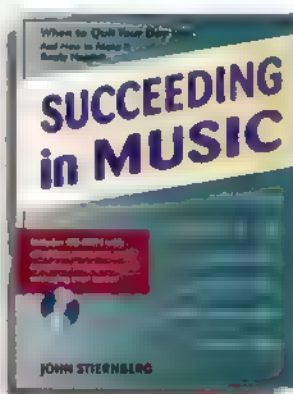
Best known as a Blue Note session leader and sideman in the '60s, Grant Green's aggressive yet eloquent tone embraced bebop, blues, funk, and more. This biography follows Green from his St. Louis gospel roots to his heyday in New York, on the Detroit circuit, and through the decline that led to his tragic death. "Uncovers a fascinating presence, and tells a worthy story truly" (*Chicago Tribune*) **\$26.95**



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Reviews

musical Jolly Roger. They make it fun to root for the bad guys. **Interscope.** —JUDE GOLD

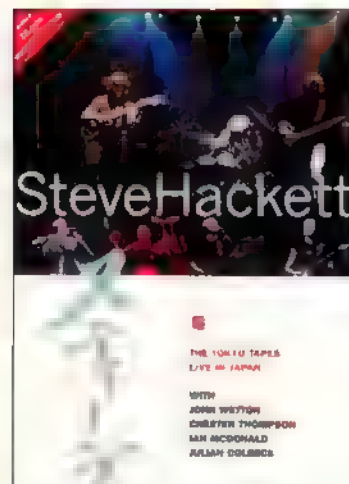


James Intveld

Somewhere Down the Road

Great songs and fat guitars grace this fine album by California roots rocker James Intveld. There's an openness and bourbon-like smoothness to Intveld's sound that contrasts with the honky-tonk toughness of indie-hick hardasses like the Deraillers and the Domino Kings. But having more breathing space for the instruments is cool because Intveld is not only a superbly talented singer and songwriter but also a skilled hand on acoustic, electric baritone, mandolin, bass, and keyboards. Second guitarist Michael Turner tackles the solo spots with vibey lead work and lush, tremolo-laced fills, while Marty Rifkin ratchets up the rural factor with his sweet pedal-steel and dobro forays. Intveld's lyrical prowess is a cut above the crowd, and it's just another reason why you may find yourself spinning this record again and again. **Molenaar.** —ART THOMPSON

DVD



Steve Hackett

The Tokyo Tapes: Live in Japan

Rabid prog-rock fans will flip over this 1996

concert. Hackett assembled an awesome band of players (including John Wetton on bass and vocals, Ian McDonald on sax and flute, and Chester Thompson on drums) that sparkles through weighty tunes such as "The Court of the Crimson King," "Riding the Colossus," and "Firth of Fifth." The video footage is sharp, and the stereo soundtrack is righteously mixed. Throughout the electric parts of the show, Hackett relies on his tremolo-equipped Les Paul to produce a soaring, vocal-like tone that is simultaneously beautiful and cutting. He also deftly caresses a classical guitar for some evocative solo, duet, and band performances. The DVD's only bonus material is a videotaped band rehearsal at Twickenham Film Studios. Players will relish the fact that, even amongst transcendent players, practice banter is pretty banal, but once Hackett's band shuts up and starts blowing, the jams will take your breath away. **Camino/MVD.** —MICHAEL MOLENDA



Johnny Winter

Pieces & Bits

Pieces & Bits is like a personal little token from Johnny Winter to his fans, and only the most fervent Winter freaks will sit through the grainy video and muddy mixes that comprise most of this collection of performances. In addition, the interview sections (some obviously recorded over a funky telephone connection) reveal little, and only a few of the concerts are identified with a date and venue. But if you can hang with the shoddy presentation, you'll be rewarded with a hell of a lot of kick-ass, blues-rock guitar. Winter clearly adores being onstage, and his performances range from sloppy-in-a-good-way to outright fearsome. The sight of him strutting onstage in black clothes and a black cowboy hat while spewing the riffs from "Rock & Roll Hoochie Koo" on his Gibson Firebird encapsulates all that is holy about earthbound guitar gods.

Continued on page 150

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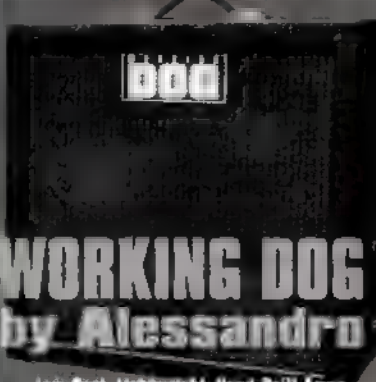
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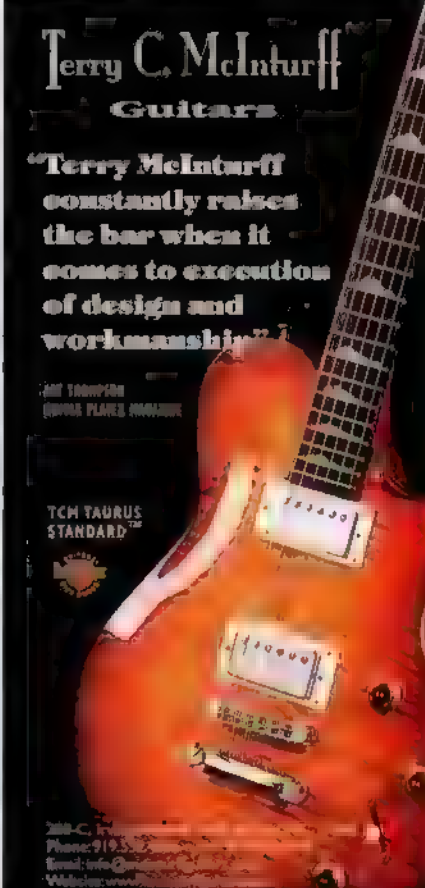
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CHOPS BUILDER

Second Helping

BY JUDE GOLD



DON'T LET ANYONE convince you that the tart, abrasive sound of the minor second in Ex. 1a is ugly—it's *dissonant*, yes, but

it can actually be used to create stirring harmonic clusters, such as the *Am#5* in Ex. 1b. Slide this grip up to the thirteenth position, and it magically revoices itself as *Am9*.

Chords that contain minor seconds sound strikingly melodic when arpeggiated, as in Ex. 2. Let the pitches ring uninterrupted so they overlap, and the minor seconds will

add deliciously jarring flavors. Pretty closing chords are easy to come by, so try completing this progression with something less predictable—such as the freakish *A6/#9*. ■



Ex. 1a

Minor second



Ex. 1b

Am#5 *Am9*



Ex. 2

Eadd11 *E9add11* *Amaj7* *Am/maj7* *Badd11* *A6/#9*



TIPS JAR

GEORGE BENSON



IN THE TRADITION OF DJANGO REINHARDT and Wes Montgomery, George Benson spices up his improvisations with octave melodies. "But sometimes when I'm playing plain octaves, I feel my solo is empty," says Benson of the octaves in Ex. 1. "For fullness, I'll place

a fifth or fourth between the octaves [Ex. 2]." For an even richer sound, Benson inserts major or minor sixths, depending on the harmony [Ex. 3], and for maximum fatness, he adds fourths and sixths [Ex. 4]. "It gives the effect of chords being played within octaves."

Ex. 1

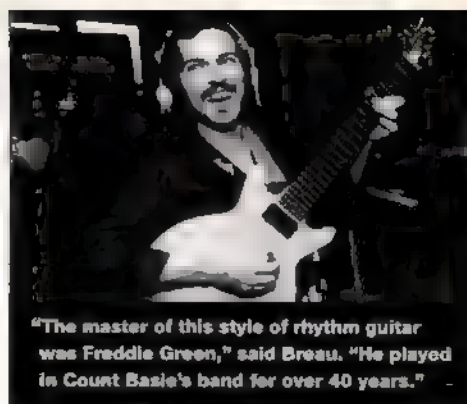
Ex. 2

Ex. 3

Ex. 4



Jazz-Blues Comping



"The master of this style of rhythm guitar was Freddie Green," said Breau. "He played in Count Basie's band for over 40 years."

BY LENNY BREAU



FOR THE MAJORITY of blues styles—including those combining elements of rock and folk music—the 12-bar structure has remained relatively simple: the I-IV-V

progression, with melodies constructed from the five-note blues scale. However, in jazz, the blues is embellished with an almost limitless combination of melodic and harmonic devices.

The most common 12-bar blues progression is four bars of I, two bars of IV, two bars of I, one bar of V, one bar of IV, and two bars of I. However, jazz players employ a harmonic framework similar to that of

Ex. 1. Note the use of the VI chord (A7) in bar 8, and how from there the harmony back-cycles home to the I in bar 10. Bars 11 and 12—the turnaround measures—use a common I-VI-II-V progression, while the $F\sharp dim7$ in bar 6 is a substitute that connects IV to I. Ex. 1 is just a skeleton; you can freely add substitute chords that include alterations and extensions, as long as you exercise good taste.

One of the best places to start learning jazz rhythm guitar is with four-to-the-bar comping. Ex. 2 is a blues progression based on the chords in Ex. 1, only using a few substitutes. These voicings work especially well for straight rhythm, and they sound very full, even though they have

only three notes. For this rhythm style, you'll get a better feel if you strum with a pick or your thumb (I use a thumbpick). Strum using downstrokes, and avoid sounding the strings not played. (They can be damped by strategic placement of your fretting hand; experiment until you're successful.) Once you've memorized Ex. 1 and can embellish it with some chords, transpose it to all keys.

Originally published in the June '84 GP. ■



Ex. 1

1 C7 F7 C7 F7 $F\sharp dim7$

7 C7 A7 Dm7 G7 C7 A7 D7 G7

Ex. 2

1 C6 C7 F $F\sharp dim7$ C G7 Gm7 C7

5 F7 $F\sharp dim7$ C6 F7 Em7 A7

9 D7 Dm7 G7 C7 A7 D7 G7

Jigsaw Chords

BY JUDE GOLD



THE FIRST TIME

you play a $C\sharp dim7$ —such as the one in Ex. 1a—you may find yourself wondering why you'd ever need such a dissonant cluster of notes. Truth is, diminished 7s and other such strident grips are, ironically, incredibly useful for

making progressions sound smoother. Plug that $C\sharp dim7$ between C and $Dm7$ (Ex. 1b), and its jagged shape all but disappears—like the last piece of a jigsaw puzzle. The same holds true for the ensuing $D\sharp dim7$, which makes a seamless harmonic bridge between $Dm7$ and $Cadd9/E$.

Diminished 7th chords are also great for connecting keys. First, make sure you have the popular diminished grip in Ex. 2a nailed. Then, try Ex. 2b, where, after a smooth ascent to $D7$ (downbeat of bar 2), we use $D\sharp dim7$ to lead us to the key of G minor. Then, pass through $G\sharp dim7$ —the perfect

gateway to $A7$. Follow the repeat sign, and voila—you're back home in the key of D .

Another useful connector chord is the dominant 7 $\sharp 11$ (commonly referred to as a "sharp 11"). Get hip to its pungent sound (Ex. 3a) and, like the diminished 7, you'll start hearing it everywhere—not just in jazz, but also in rock, soul, blues, and other genres. In Motown, sharp 11s show up in the funky Stevie Wonder classic, "Superstition." You'll find them in the song's bridge section—which is similar to Ex. 3b. After playing the opening $V7$ chord ($B7$), notice how the sharp 11 chords steer you smoothly down to $A7$. Resolve the $B7\sharp 5$ with a Wonder-styled vamp in E .

Ex. 1a

$C\sharp dim7$



Ex. 1b

Freely C $C\sharp dim7$ $Dm7$ $D\sharp dim7$ $Cadd9/E$



Ex. 2a

$D\sharp dim7$



Ex. 2b

Freely D $D\sharp dim7$ Em $Ddim7$ $D7$ $D\sharp dim7$ $Gm add9$ $G\sharp dim7$ $A7$



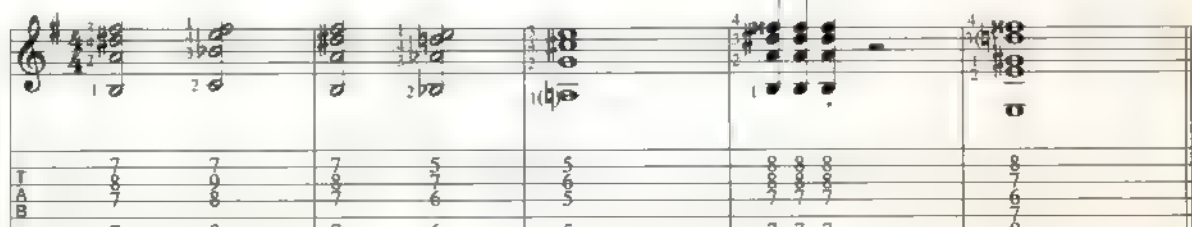
Ex. 3a

$C7\sharp 11$



Ex. 3b

(V7) $B7$ $C7\sharp 11$ $B7$ $Bb7\sharp 11$ $A7$ $B7\sharp 5$ (I) $E7\sharp 9$



12/8 Rhythm Trainer

BY TOM BEARDSLEE



IF YOU CAN PLAY A BLUES, funk, reggae, or swing-jazz shuffle, you're familiar with 12/8 time. You may even understand the mechanics of 12/8—after all, it's simply 4/4 time with three eighth-notes per downbeat instead of just two. But do you have 12/8 truly nailed? One way to find out—and become more groove literate in the process—is to learn the Agbekor bell pattern. This must-know African rhythm shows up everywhere, including Cuban and Caribbean music, and in western pop, funk, and jazz.

First, make sure you can strum triplets solidly (Ex. 1). To get your body involved, put your guitar aside, tap your foot in familiar 4/4 time, and with each tap, say "tri-puh-let," evenly splitting each beat into three parts. Now, move your right hand as if you're strumming each syllable. Notice that if you start the first triplet with a down-strum, the second must start with an up-strum, and so on. Finally, grab your guitar, choose a chord, and strum these triplets until you can handle 12/8 at a range of tempos.

Now you're ready to bring out the accents that make up the Agbekor bell pattern (Ex. 2). Learning the rhythm is easy if you accent the syllables as follows: "tri-puh-let tri-puh-let tri-puh-let tri-puh-let."

The boldfaced syllables represent the bell hits, the others are the rests. To see how the bell pattern manifests in a James Brown-flavored funk shuffle, move on to Ex. 3. Stay in the pocket by keeping your strumming motion going at all times, and half-lifting your chords on the rests to mute the strings. Once you've got it down, try reversing your strumming order, which will give the rhythm a brand new feel. Remember,

with African and African-derived music, the old adage is especially true: The notes you *don't* play are just as important as the ones you do.

Ethnomusicologist Tom Beardslee currently works with Guinean singer Sekouba Bambino, and is writing a thesis on Ghanaian music. Contact him at guitar-traveler.com.

Ex. 1

say: tri - puh - let tri - puh - let tri - puh - let tri - puh - let
strum: **▼** **▲** **▼** **▲** **▼** **▲** **▼** **▲** **▼** **▲** **▼** **▲**

Ex. 2



Ex. 3

♩ = 100-160 Em6 Em7

() = muted strokes

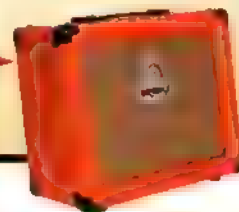


READER'S CHALLENGE • SNAP AND TWANG

NATURALLY, WHEN YOU'RE ON THE HUNT FOR A HOT new chicken-pickin' lick, you look to... *Canada?* This twangy tendon-teaser comes from John Kieselhorst, who hails from Surrey, British Columbia, but has knuckles that are all Nashville. "You can use a pick on the single-note lines, but it sounds snappier if you use an alternating thumb/index-finger attack," says Kieselhorst. "Pluck

the double-stops with your middle and ring fingers." Start by learning the moves. Then, dial in a tasty slapback echo, work up to speed, and soon the feathers will be flying!

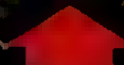
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♩ = 88-108 E7

() = muted strokes





Bar Hopping

BY JESSE GRESS



THE VIBRATO BAR—ALSO

known as the tremolo bar, whammy bar, wiggle stick, hand brake, and other pet names—has become a vital tool of expression for electric guitarists. In addition to vibrato and radical sound effects, a properly maintained bar offers a world of

melodic subtleties.

Ex. 1a illustrates how to bend into a note by depressing the bar slightly, picking the note, and releasing the bar. This creates a subtle *wang* or *yaw* effect that grows more pronounced the deeper you dip. To sustain notes, try “playing the bar,” as in Ex. 1b. The rhythmic

subdivisions in each measure are generated from a single pick attack. Don’t take the -1 (whole-step dip) indicators too literally—just concentrate on pumping out those rhythms.

This “bar picking” technique can serve you melodically. Examples 2a and 2b generate similar eighth-note and eighth-note triplet motifs

Ex. 1a Am7 or A7#9

(any amount)

w/ bar

Ex. 1b

w/ bar

Ex. 2a Am7 or A7#9

w/ bar

Ex. 2b Am7 or A7#9

w/ bar

Ex. 3a

Am7 or A7#9

w/ bar

Ex. 3b

Am7 or A7#9

w/ bar

from a single picked or hammered attack, while incorporating hammer-ons and pull-offs. Instead of holding on to the bar, try using rhythmic karate chops.

The bar can also be used to bend to

specific pitches. Accuracy really counts now, so lighten up your touch to articulate the half-step bends in Ex. 3a. The bar no longer triggers the downbeat, so reinforce your time with a strong pinky hammer.

Since the standard notation now reflects specific bent notes, it no longer requires messy whammy bar symbols, but "B"s and "R"s are added to indicate bar bends and releases. Ex. 3b aggressively descends a four-note A pentatonic minor motif with rhythmic and melodic dips and releases to and from each scale tone.

Most bars can be adjusted to pull upward and raise pitches. This allows you to extract more melodies from a single note. In Ex. 4, three pitches are extrapolated from one harmonic. The bar notation adds "+" symbols between staves to indicate upward bends. In Ex. 5, drop the same harmonic through three discrete pitches before playing the 4-3-1 resolution in measure 2.

We've barely scratched the surface of this magic wand's potential. If you've been neglecting your whammy, drop a few bucks on a good setup and get hopping! For inspiration, check out these twang-bar kings. Jeff Beck, Adrian Belew, Tommy Bolin, Jimi Hendrix, Alan Holdsworth, Steve Vai, and Edward Van Halen.

Jesse Gress plays with Todd Rundgren and the Tony Levin Band. Check out his new book, The Guitar Cookbook (Backbeat), at jessegress.com.

Ex. 4 G
8va

Ex. 5 G
8va

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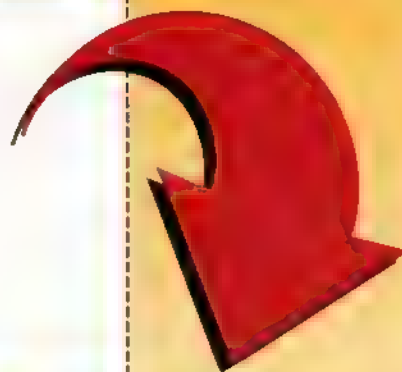
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Continued from page 142

Whew! Winter also tears it up in segments with Muddy Waters, Dr. John, and G.E. Smith's band for Bob Dylan's 1992 birthday bash at Madison Square Garden. There are no bonuses on this disc—and the sound seems to bounce between stereo and mono—but if it's all about the playing for you, Winter delivers the guitar goods. **MVD.**

—MICHAEL MOLEND

**U2***Elevation 2001: Live From Boston*

Usually, when U2 hits the road, their massive popularity forces them into doing huge, impersonal stadium tours. For their recent *Elevation* trek, however, the Irish super group decided to get closer to their fans by booking cozier venues—namely, 18,000-seat basketball arenas. Then, they built a special heart-shaped stage that let them get in the faces of their fans—people could feel the drizzle when Bono spat out his lyrics. The results were spectacular: arena rock delivered with the sweaty intensity of a club act. And all the action is captured on this new DVD.

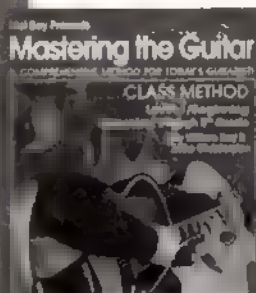
The only thing this double-disc set lacks is an Edge-cam. There's a fan-cam, a director's-cam, and even a sunglasses-cam which lets you be Bono and have thousands of people grabbing at your shoelaces. But *The Edge* is rarely onscreen for more than a couple of seconds. You'd kill for longer shots of him creating that glorious noise, generating majestic textures from that boundless palette of tones. Just one close-up of his elaborate rig would be sweet. You begin to realize, however, that the film editing—like *The Edge*'s transcendent guitar work—serves not the guitar geek, but the band onstage. In fact, it's emblematic of *The Edge*'s approach: The song always comes first. After all, it's not *The Edge*'s awesome playing that packs stadiums, but his band's great songs. **Interscope.**

—JUDE GOLD

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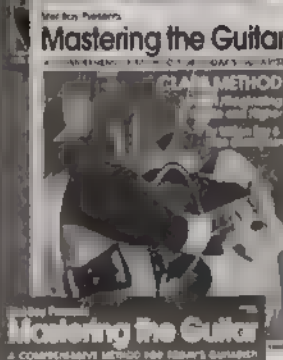
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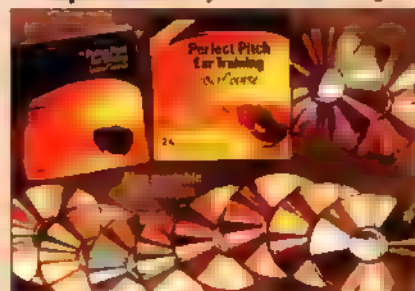
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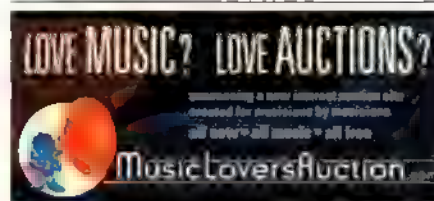
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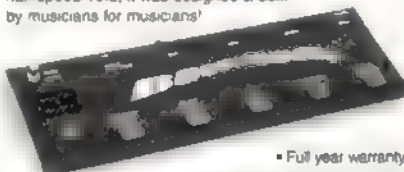
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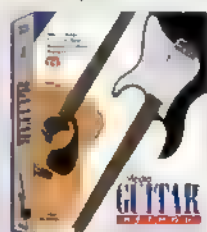
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Encore CLASSIC INTERVIEW • MICHAEL BLOOMFIELD • 1979



GUITAR PLAYER, APRIL 1979—

Of all the people I interviewed for *Guitar Player*, few were as memorable as blues-rock pioneer Michael Bloomfield. He was among the first-generation guitar heroes of the '60s—a role he was always uncomfortable with. Portrayed as a rock star, Bloomfield was, in fact, a bluesman to his bones—one who, as he put it, “played with every living musician who played electric blues.” His style was infused with a stinging yet melodious tone that seemed to reflect the bittersweetness of much of his music, as well as his own life. He was funny, smart, and literate. His tastes ranged from gritty writers such as poet/novelist Charles Bukowski and columnist Jimmy Breslin to Japanese monster comics. Published two years before his death, this excerpt from *GP*'s April '79 cover story finds Bloomfield reflecting upon how he relates to the trappings of fame.

—TOM WHEELER

• • • • •
During the '60s, were you stimulated by all the attention?

Well, I don't need ego fixes. As much as anyone else, I enjoy energy transference. In its highest form, you would see it in a church, where you have a good preacher who goes nuts, and the audience has orgasms. That's all well and good, but I'm just not a compulsive junkie for mass ego glut. Bob Marley explained to me that he found it emasculating to play in front of people sometimes. It takes away some of your personal store of self, because the audience doesn't know who you are, and you're exhibiting some of your innards in front of strange people. Idolatry is dangerous because the audience has a preconception of you even though you cannot get a conception of them. You have to look upon them as a herd. Every time I get together with anyone, I try to break it down quickly, this herd situation.

So the person does not look at you as a symbol?

Exactly—so they are not experiencing a face on a record cover. Instead they're talking



"I have a way of seeing the world, and everything is filtered through this certain aesthetic mechanism," said Bloomfield. "It's a pure visceral thing."

to me, a person, doing what I do. People resent it sometimes when we move on and don't fit their preconceptions. I'm the same way, really. I want to see B.B. King with a processed hairdo.

But you didn't relate to being a rock star yourself?

I couldn't conceive of it. I had no idea it was happening. I was into researching old forms of music, belonging to folklore societies,

meeting old players, and going to folk festivals. I'd been playing bluegrass and country blues for years and never pictured myself as a big electric guitar hero.

You didn't see yourself as the American Eric Clapton?

Never. I read a lot of stuff about all that, but it wasn't real for me. All those social implications and ramifications of a rock star trip—I was never into it.

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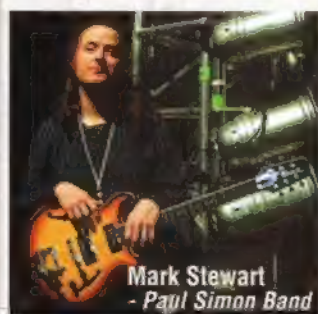
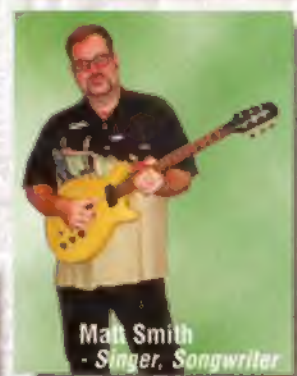
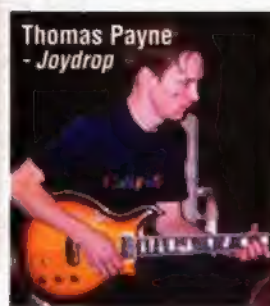
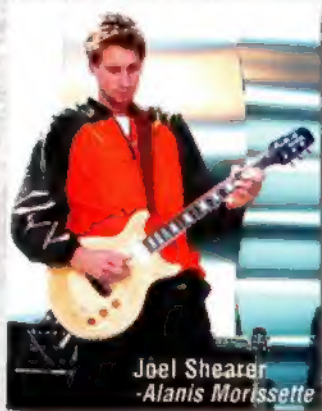
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